

A SUMMER AND WINTER
IN
THE TWO SICILIES.
COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS.

JULIA KAVANAGH,
VOL. CCCCLX.

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THE TWO SICILIES BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARDT TAUCHNITZ

1838.

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FIRST CHAPTER.

Sicily.

WE spent but a few rainy days in Naples. As soon as the sky cleared, we went off to Sicily.

At four punctually, the Amalfi was to leave Naples for Palermo. Accordingly, we were on board at half-past three. As the omnipotent Polizia, without whose leave we could not stir, did not choose to come and grant us that permission before five, we had full leisure to look at the shipping and the bay. The bay was still too near, the shipping was not interesting. I found more pleasure in watching the passengers.

A brown Neapolitan woman, bare-headed, and with pendant gold ear-rings, had come to see her friends on board. She was sorely distressed for them, poor thing! She sighed, she clasped her hands, she turned up her eyes, and pathetically asked, "What a Christian was to do in case of rain? Where was he to hide himself on that bare deck?"

"There are houses below," sagaciously said a little boy, who belonged to the party; "and when the rain comes, people go down and take shelter."

This completely satisfied her.

I was seated by another Neapolitan, of a different stamp. She was maid in a very aristocratic English family, she said; and she had no mean opinion of herself and of her position in life. She spoke bad Italian, and worse English, though she had spent thirty years in England. She was haunted by the ghost of English cleanliness; she had a horror of her native Naples, and especially of her dirty countrymen, the Neapolitans; and she loved — oh! dearly, dearly, beautiful — clean

England. However, Lady —, her mistress, having taken a fancy to poor, dirty Italy, she — unhappy victim! — had to follow her, and be defiled. She had to take care of the luggage, which was a great worry, and to travel first-class, which was a pity, for she was so ill on sea that she could not eat.”

All this she poured forth with Neapolitan volubility in the strangest English; then, perceiving two ladies in hoods seated on another bench, and guessing or knowing that they were Sicilians, she went up to them to be satisfied respecting the cleanliness of Sicily. She soon came back with a beaming face. She had received an excellent character of Sicily. The Palermitans especially were pinks of cleanliness. Their time was spent in washing the floors of their houses; water was laid on in every flat, &c., &c.

“It is a great comfort to me,” she said, with a sigh of relief; and having succeeded in her object, which was to convince me that, though a Neapolitan, she really was a clean person, she left me in peace.

March is not pleasant for sea journeys, and especially in the sharp Sicilian seas. There were very few passengers on board. These few were now gathered at one end of the deck, looking at the little boy who escorts every steamer in or out of Naples. He is a lad of nine at the utmost — small, supple, brown as a berry, with a quick Italian face, such a face as out of Italy you never see with a child. He comes in a little four-oared boat, and, on this floating stage, he will dance the Tarentella, act the buffoon, sing an aria, fight an invisible foe, stab himself at the feet of a faithless lady, and, turning up the whites of his eyes, die in the bottom of his boat as gracefully as the ancient gladiator, from whom he is most probably descended. Having lain there long enough to impress the audience, he starts to his feet — bare, of course — doffs the cloth cap that covers his little curly head, and generally reaps a plentiful harvest of coppers and silver-pieces. Of the coins that are thrown to him whilst he is acting, he takes no notice — they may roll in the bottom of the boat, and fall into the sea, for all it matters to the little Improvisatore.

Having received all he was to get — it was not much this time — he gave us a graceful wave of the hand, wished us a happy journey, and was rowed away by a brown and half-bare young boatman, almost as shabby as himself. Another boat brought us the *Polizia*; we got our passports, and were left at full liberty to go to Palermo.

Naples receded, and looked infinitely better for a little distance, the bay widened and became truly magnificent; the mountains, on the sharp summits of which snow still lingered by patches, looked bluish on a stormy sky; Vesuvius smoked sullenly; the sun was setting in the west; it lit the sky with a flaming glow, that crossed the whole sea, and seemed to set the front of Naples on fire, and on that burning background of sea and sky rose the dark purple outlines of Capri, which we were approaching rapidly. I should have liked to see it nearer, but the sun set, night came, a chill breeze rose, and we had to go down to those houses, as the little boy called them, which lie below deck.

The night was fierce and tempestuous, and the *Amalfi* being a screw did not mend matters. Wel-

come, indeed, was the morning, and the assurance that we were really in the harbour of Palermo. With worn and sallow faces, the passengers crept upon deck.

"So sick — so sick," said the poor Neapolitan, ruefully.

The two ladies in hoods shook their heads, and looked miserable in the extreme.

A chorus of laments ushered in the Amalfi in Palermo.

The morning was clear and warm, the sea was calm. There was scarcely any shipping in the port. Wild, abrupt mountains rose high and steep, and seemed to enclose it. I looked more at them than at the outskirts of the city.

The shapes of mountains have a strong effect on the mind. When they are familiar how much do they not add to the friendly aspect of a landscape; but when they are strange, they give, spite their beauty, if beautiful they be, a sort of pain. They speak of a new land, which they guard and conceal, but they say no more. Imagination has no guide to help it to penetrate their fastnesses;

valleys, plains, a stormy sea, may, for all it knows, be hidden behind those motionless giants; they may be but a shallow ridge, without depth or mystery, or they may rise as barriers, all but impassable, between land and land, and race and race. I had grown so familiar with the mountains that surround Sorrento, that I had lost the sense of their tameness or beauty. I knew, too, what lay behind them, from Santa Agata to Sant Angelo, but in Palermo I was conscious of a new country, about which, not having much cultivated Sicilian geography, I knew very little. A French gentleman, who stood by me and who knew Sicily well, he said, undertook to enlighten me. He told me the names of all the mountains.

“And Etna?” I said.

He gave a rapid look round the horizon, but Etna was invisible.

“The day is not favourable,” he benevolently replied, “but on a clear morning, climb up any of the neighbouring mountains, and you will see Etna quite plainly.”

I had a faint impression that Etna and Palermo

were rather far apart, but the French gentleman knew Sicily too well, and spoke too confidently for me to doubt his word. We were now called down to answer the questions of the Polizia, then packed in a boat and rowed to the Custom-House. The way was long, and the French gentleman, who was a tight, lively, little red-haired Marseillaise, organized a conspiracy, and asked the master of the hôtel, who accompanied us, for what earthly purpose we were going to the Custom-House?

A shrug and a smile were the only reply of our guide.

"Ah! bah!" pursued the French gentleman, "we all know the country, you can get us out of that."

The master of the hôtel looked and coughed more than he said: "I can try."

He did try, and succeeded so well that he landed alone at the Dogana, said a few words to a Gabelliere, then came back and told the boatmen to row us back.

"How much?" asked the French gentleman.

“Four carlini.”

For four carlini, 16d., a government was betrayed and consciences were sold. And the worst of this shameful corruption is, that travellers cannot avoid submitting to it. For even though we had landed, even though our luggage had been searched from top to bottom, we should still have had to give the four carlini. It is impossible to outwit an Italian — and a Sicilian is said to be the quintessence of Italian subtlety — and when he is resolved on having money from you, the very best thing you can do is to give him some; for some he certainly will get — whether you like it or not.

Sufficient proof had we of this trite truth when our rowers landed us at the end of the port. Another set of Gabellieri exacted tribute. In vain had we passed through the nominal ordeal of the rightful Custom-House, in vain was their claim the grossest imposition, we had to pay. Nay, more; when we passed beneath Porta Felice, which stood wide open for every one, the keeper darted out of his den, and took his tax. By the

time we reached the Hôtel de France, our expenses, our fare in the boat included, reached a piastre and a half. The half-piastre was for bribery, the piastre for our boatmen. I thought their charges high; but the master of the hôtel looked grave, and said emphatically, "E la tariffa." We had our doubts concerning the said legal fare; but remonstrance was useless, so we paid without further demur.

There are only two hôtels fit for foreigners — so say the Sicilians themselves — in Palermo: the Trinacria, which rises above a delightful walk by the sea, and the Hôtel de France, on Piazza Marina. Both are excellent. The Hôtel de France deserved the name for cleanliness which the two Sicilian ladies had given to their country. It was immaculate.

We had a room that commanded a full view of Piazza Marina. It looked rather dreary, but I paid little attention to it — fatigue absorbed every other feeling. A wailing wind and the sound of some very sweet bells, that seemed to have been cast in silver, awoke me several times in the night. The

servant had forgotten to close the shutters — through the window-panes I saw a sky, black, save where a few stars shone; strange-looking mountain-peaks, that rose above thin, fleecy clouds; and below all, a wide space, with melancholy lights flickering here and there.

But very different indeed was the morning. In the first place, it was a heavenly spring morning — and a spring morning in Sicily is something to remember. I opened the window, and walked out on the balcony. There was not a cloud in the pale blue sky; stillness seemed to repose on the summits of the purple mountains that bounded the north; the warmth and the brightness of a southern sun filled the wide piazza. A short street to the right led to the port. Above a flight of steps rose a little church — the sun had baked its yellow stone into warm, burning orange; near it stood tall houses; cool, summer-like, looked the gloom of their projecting iron balconies. Groups of fishermen stood in the shade, and between church and houses there was just a glimpse of a bit of calm, shining water, and of boats, some lying idly, others softly gliding

out with white sails spread. The lines of a violet-coloured mountain, broken by the delicate spars of an invisible boat — a battered wall, covered with verdure, hid it — bounded the prospect.

I turned round, and asked Michela, the housemaid, the name of that mountain? She seemed amused at my ignorance.

“Monte Peregrino,” she replied; “the shrine of Santa Rosalia.”

I thought, at first, that the saint had given the name to the mountain, but, long before she lived, the Arab rulers of Sicily had given the name of Pilgrim Mount to the bold, abrupt mass of rock that seems to forbid and to guard the city of Palermo. However, this was a piece of historical lore which I did not derive from Michela.

She was no unfair specimen of the Sicilian. She was a little woman, of forty or so, with high cheek-bones, rather harsh features, but with a countenance across which thought passed as she spoke, and a pair of magnificent black eyes.

Italian eyes and Sicilian eyes, though both dark and very fine, are not in the least alike. Italian eyes are soft and dreamy; they are subtle and silent. Look at them, or rather look into them, as much and as long as you like, you learn nothing save what they wish to tell; and in that silence there is, it must be confessed, both dignity and repose.

Sicilian eyes are not much more communicative, but they defy the scrutiny which Italian eyes calmly baffle. Their look is quick, haughty, ardent, but so expressive, so full of light and meaning, that it really and literally speaks; and dull indeed must be the mind that does not apprehend in a moment the meaning that look means to convey.

The eyes of Michela, even more than her features — even more than her accented, half-Spanish Italian — showed me that I was with a new race. We went out for a walk, and everywhere I met the same dark, mobile, expressive eyes, looking at us from beneath the white-hooded cloak of the peasant girl, or calmly examining us in the person

of the lady. Yet there are two very distinct women in Palermo — the woman of the people, energetic, irascible-looking, and rather harsh-featured; the lady, small, elegant, with a pale face, slight and delicate features, and a length of upper lip by no means Italian. Whether they belong or not to the same race, or whether the woman of the people is the native Sicilian, and the lady a descendant of the Spanish rulers, is more than I know.

It is not easy to say which is the best way of seeing a city, or how it is right to begin. We began by the streets of Palermo.

Two wide, well-built streets, meeting at right angles, somewhere about the centre of the town, divide it into four distinct parts, known by their respective names of Loggia, Albergaria, Kalsa, and Capo. An open space, called the Quattro Cantoni, the four corners, marks the spot where these four parts meet. But though Palermo is thus excellently divided for a methodical traveller, who likes to begin at the beginning and end at the end, it is not so regularly built that it does not afford equally

excellent opportunities for the amateur traveller, who likes to digress into bye streets, hunt out churches, and catch glimpses of all sorts of out-of-the-way places.

The main street of Palermo, the Toledo, preserves in its aspect, as well as in its name, evident tokens of Spanish presence. Indeed, many influences are visible in Sicily. The Greek, the Carthaginian, the Roman, the Arab, the Norman, the Spaniard, have held her successively. Palermo has forgotten her more ancient rulers, but she has kept vivid traces of her more modern masters.

The Toledo is a straight street, it passes through the city from Porta Felice to Porta Nuova, and, on a fine day, you can see the blue sky beneath the arch of one gate, and the blue sea framed by the other. Yet its aspect is picturesque and entertaining. This was a Saturday, a market-day, and it was very lively. Lanes and alleys delved down on every side, and every one was a picture.

There was one — I remember it well — a narrow, tortuous place, with just a patch of blue sky

above the uneven line of the roofs where the opposite houses — tall houses, with huge projecting balconies of iron, wood, or stone — seemed to meet. It was alive with human heads below, and with maccaroni and linen, both hung out to dry above. The little pavement there was taken up by dingy booths, where dealers sold green peas — in March — fish in abundance, heaps of lemons and oranges, exquisite nosegays of violets and roses, with sprigs of the orange-flower, for which it was rather early yet; but not much meat, and the brownest of bread.

“It is only fit for us Sicilians,” I was told. “There is a French baker in the Toledo for foreigners!” for the foreigner here, as elsewhere, is King Absolute.

The shops in the Toledo are a degree better; yet they are small, and primitive in the extreme — such shops as we meet with in remote country towns, or in ancient streets on the outskirts of London — dark, narrow, close, inconvenient, mere rooms — not modern shops, which are gas-lit mansions, with stylish gentlemen and ladies in

flounced silk, but real, ancient, middle-age shops, where weavers weave stockings, and tailors make coats, and shoemakers make shoes, and masons fashion beautiful marble tables, ay, and where painters sit and paint pictures — places for work, in short, and not, to adopt London phraseology, “depôts” for sale.

They are very picturesque, especially when shirts hang out to dry from a pole fixed in the little arched windows above. The said windows belong, I believe, to low, smothered rooms, where the people sleep at night; but they live in the shops in the day, eat in them as well as work in them; and when they find them inconveniently small, they get out into the street, and do their work or their business there.

Of course, there was the usual number of lottery-ticket offices. There was, too, but not in a shop — he needs none — an individual unknown in London, and fast passing away from Paris, but who still carries on a thriving business in the south of Italy, the public scrivener. In every con-

venient corner we found him, dingy, ink-stained, and busy.

Spite the unpretending aspect of the shops, the houses of the Toledo are tall, strong, and well built. They have large picturesque balconies, where the ladies seem to spend a moderate portion of their time. The upper balconies — and some extend along the roofs of the houses — are mostly grated, and very closely grated, too. No wonder, they belong to nunneries.

There are no gardens within Palermo, though, considering its size, there are plenty of convents.

Accordingly, the recluses have private or underground passages, that lead from their cloisters to some fourth or fifth floor in the Toledo, where they can go and breathe the fresh evening air after the heat of the day. The convents, that are too remote from the Toledo to enjoy this privilege, are all, however, I believe, provided with belvederes; and since this first promenade in the Toledo, I have seen a wide terrace that belongs to Dominican nuns, near Porta Macqueda, and on which, I have been told, they now and then take a drive in a carriage.

"Do they keep a carriage and horses?" I asked, rather surprised.

"They hire them," replied my informant.

I unfortunately forgot to ask him who drove the carriage, and though he was a Palermitan, and ought to know, I have doubts concerning the correctness of his statement.

Churches line the Toledo, and they are almost all magnificent. That wealth, which the northern architect lavished in sculptured stone, has here been expended in splendid marbles and costly alabasters. Some of the churches of Palermo are literally masses of mosaic, and the columns, the floors, the chapels, the altars, are of inlaid marbles, often, indeed, the altars and tabernacles are of precious stones; lapis lazuli, verde, jasper, here grow common to the eye. Yet these magnificent churches, which belong chiefly to the last two or three centuries, are by no means the most interesting in Palermo. Here, as in Venice, that other city of splendid churches, there are Christian edifices that speak of the East to the most careless beholder.

The cathedral of Palermo is alone something to

remember. It stands at the end of the Toledo, in a wide piazza, on the right hand side. An ignorant or hasty observer would call it a Gothic cathedral; yellow, instead of being grey, like our northern temples; and archæologist would call it a fine specimen of the Sicilian-Arab-Norman style, and none but a barbarian would look at it with indifference. It was erected towards the close of the twelfth century, by an Archbishop of Palermo, a hundred years after the island had been delivered from the yoke of the Saracens by the Norman conquerors. Arabic inscriptions have remained engraved on its sculptured porticoes, and seemed to strengthen the conjecture that it was originally a mosque, a conjecture founded, I suppose, on the elegance and beauty of ornament, which have made an enthusiastic traveller place it next to the Alhambra and the famous mosque of Cordova.

Let the Cathedral of Palermo be whatever it pleases, Sicilian, Norman, or Arabian Gothic, it can bear any name whilst it stands, as we saw it, on a sunlit piazza, with the statue of Santa Rosalia in the centre. A noble building, though not faultless,

rich in beautiful and delicate sculpture, clothed in magic colour, and rising in dazzling gold outlines on a magic sky of purest blue.

Seven hundred years have passed over it and left it uninjured, but it has not escaped scathless from the hand of man. It has been repaired. It has had a classic dome and statues put upon it, and, spite of this, it is still beautiful. It stands, as I said, on a piazza, but not entirely isolated. Streets, quiet and lonely, shade it north and east, but to the south, its most beautiful aspect, it lies exposed to the full heat of a burning sun. Has that sun, shining on it for seven ages, burned into it that warm yet mellow hue, infinitely softer than any tint of yellow or orange, infinitely more ardent and vivid than the warmest of Italian browns? That colour which is so beautiful because it is the result and the blending of many colours, from the palest yellow to the deepest and most shadowy brown, with every tint between, from vermillion to sepia.

But, alas! for the interior! It has been white-washed. In vain it has magnificent altars, fine

sculptures, and some good paintings, it chills your very heart. But one chapel has preserved a character in keeping with the exterior. It is cold and silent, but coldness and silence suit the grave, and, guarded by railings, this chapel holds the marble and porphyry tombs of six royal sleepers. A Sicilian king, an Emperor and two Empresses of Germany, and two princes of Spanish blood rest in those gloomy but splendid sepulchres, and represent three of the dynasties by which Sicily has been ruled.

With the Duomo, which the people know by the name of Matrice, ended our first excursion in the Toledo. We had seen piazzas here and there, and one or two most Moorish-looking bye-places, where ancient fountains trickled down in their stone basins; blind alleys, where the poor dwelt, and where perpetual shade kept the delicate maiden's hair, that clung to the stone walls, fresh and green; but glimpses, though charming, and impressions, though delightful, give little room for description, which is an exact sort of thing, and we did our best not to see the same things twice, which is a

blunder in such travellers as do not mean to become residents.

The morning was still lovely when we came back to the hôtel, it was a day for the mountains, and complaisant donkeys were waiting. We decided on going to Santa Rosalia. We left the city by the port, through the suburbs. The usual picturesque scenes of Italian life were everywhere on our way — amongst the rest, a band of prisoners, mountaineers in velveteen, with dark faces, bold eyes, and a very bandit look — now and then I saw strange things, and questioned our little ciuciaro, but he did not know Italian, and I was not more learned in Sicilian, so I dare not rely sufficiently on the information he gave me to repeat it here. He was about fourteen, slim, sunburnt, with rather a gipsy face, but his cold, careless manner was proud enough for a prince. He gave himself no sort of trouble about us or his donkeys; he let them trot or lag at their pleasure; every now and then his hand dived into a side pocket, and brought forth a small orange, which he cut and eat in slices, just as we might eat an apple, but even this he did

without the heartiness of boyish appetite, and just as he walked by our side, like a thing he was to do.

Palermo is not a large city; it was soon left behind us; the outskirts are thinly peopled; we saw a few country houses, a few orchards, white with fruit-trees in bloom, and after these, extending to the foot of Monte Peregrino, and climbing up its stony sides, fields of the prickly pear, the species of cactus botanically called *opuntia*, which, with the aloes, gives Sicily such a look, half tropical, half eastern.

Few objects in Nature have a greater influence on the imagination than vegetation. What images, even as mere names, the palm-tree of Judæa, the cedar of Lebanon, the pine-forests of the north, the orange-groves of the south, call up! Doubly potent is the reality. These fields of cactuses, growing in a sandy plain, washed by the sea, at the foot of a wild and barren-looking mountain; spreading their gigantic, uncouth limbs, clad in thorns and grey or livid green, with many a strange distortion, half painful, half ludicrous; raising to the burning

sun of noon their glistening backs cased in impenetrable armour, did not seem mere plants to me, but living, animate creatures, dwelling there because it was hot, and they liked it.

We had reached the foot of the mountain; before us rose, on arches, the fine road that leads to the shrine of Santa Rosalia, and higher still, to the Telegraph. A flock of goats, with a picturesque herdsman leaning on his staff, was grazing on the green slope, and in the grass there sparkled flowers, red, blue, yellow, purple, with a vividness of colour, and in a variety of kinds I never saw equaled. Proserpina herself, in the fields of Enna, never saw, on a spring morning, blossoms more fresh or beautiful than these. Yet, though a goddess and the daughter of a goddess, she heaped her lap with perishable mortal flowers, beautiful enough it seems to charm even a divine heart. Everyone knows how ungallantly Pluto behaved. Poor Proserpina, what a sad life she must have had of it in Tartarus, with an eternal present of gloom, and woe, and tormented souls, and in the past, earth, sunshine, and her nymphs, in the flowery fields of Enna.

We stopped again a little way up the mountain, but who would not have stopped this time to look at one of the most beautiful prospects which ever lay beneath mortal eye.

Palermo is built in a wide plain, bounded by Alpine mountains, and skirted by a long line of sea. Distinct and sparkling in the sun lay the city below us. It was some miles distant, but the air was so clear that we could have counted every one of its church towers. A bright blue sea, that mingled with the sky, spread away to the left; we saw, as on a map, every one of its dents on the shore, and we followed it far away on its way, beyond many a promontory, to those mountains — heaven knows if they were not in Italy — which rose, white with snow, in the remoteness of the sky. The other mountains, those that enclose the plain of Palermo, were soft with warm mists, green and luxuriant. Everywhere orchards in bloom, fields of cactuses, glistening in the sun, gardens of orange-trees, fields watered by the small canals that fertilise the soil of Palermo, descended from those mountains to the very gates of the city, and told

the prodigal bounty of Nature and the careful industry of man. For the first time I seemed to understand, even as for the first time I saw, what a city is.

It reads like a paradox, but no one, or scarcely any one, ever does see a city. You may climb up to the ball of St. Paul's, and see the roofs of London — or you may go to Highgate Hill, or any hill, and look at the smoke of London — but you do not see London. In one instance, it is too near; in the other, it is too smoky; and in both, it is too big. The eye cannot embrace its vastness.

Thus, too, with Paris. The view from Notre-Dame is a fine one, and the broad horizon, which lies at your feet when you stand on Montmartre, bounds a great and magnificent city; but from either spot, what do you see? Still roofs — a wilderness of roofs — nothing like a distinct shape, like a clear outline, for the eye to apprehend and memory to retain. When we were in Milan, we went up, of course, to the Duomo, and we saw (sight never to be forgotten!) the sun rising on the Alpine chain, miles away. Fire, gold, and azure passed athwart

their snowy peaks with swift and invading power. It was a grand sight! but what had Milan to do with it? Nothing, of course; and what it was like, or whether we really looked at it, I cannot now remember.

The view from the campanile of Saint Mark's is more satisfactory. You see Alpine summits clad in snow; islands on the sea; far green shores; and around you, with her sunlit domes and her water-streets traced in lines of light and shade, Venice, "throned on her hundred isles." But you are too much in the city to see it. Rome from the Pincio is no better. The prospect every one pauses there to admire is that of the Campagna, undulating away to the vast horizon of a desert plain, where Saint Peter seems to dwell in solitary greatness. The wide, empty spaces, which Rome comprises, within her walls, take away the sense of her limits. She looks what she is — a mourner — one who was mighty once, but whose strength and whose power the wilderness has invaded.

Such a view as you get of Geneva or Lausanne from Lake Lemman, of Genoa or Naples from the

sea, is, though splendid, a fragmentary and incomplete view. The calm beauty of the lake, the well-built quays, which give a very deceitful impression of the dingy city behind them, are the objects of your admiration or attention in Geneva. The wildness of the mountains, a picturesque position, are all you remember of the distant view of Lausanne. In Naples, you think more of the magnificence of a bay, which seems made to receive the fleets of nations, of the heavy smoke which hangs over the purple brow of Vesuvius, than of that white line of houses which skirts the shore, and is Naples. Even so with Genoa. Crowned with triple hills, adorned with orange gardens, she raises to the sea a front of marble palaces, and calls herself, in her pride, *Superba*, the Magnificent. The effect is magic, but it is a magic which a nearer view, and above all, which landing dispels. The dirt of the port, the narrowness of the streets, the perplexed impression they leave on the mind, have a character, no doubt, but it is not that of distinctness.

But if you look at Palermo from Monte Pere-

grino, no such disappointment awaits you. Admire, censure, the city lies there. You can measure her strength with the eye, reckon up her resources with a look.

The shipping which the sea brings to her port, an indifferent one, it is true — her walls with their fifteen gates, her numerous churches, convents, and palaces, the villas and delightful gardens that surround her, the cultivated plain that stretches away to the base of the mountains — all lie clear as in any of the mythological cities which Poussin and Claude painted, and which Turner half-revived. The smallness of Palermo — it has only a five miles circuit — may help to this result, but rather points another moral than detracts from the pleasure afforded by its distinctness.

Why should capitals, centres of thought, intellect, and activity, necessarily be huge Babylons? They may be — indeed they are so in our own times — but size is surely not a condition of their greatness. It is not indispensable that they should cover square miles, nor reckon their numbers by millions. The greatest of ancient cities were by

no means large; and Palermo, with its two hundred thousand souls, with its stately streets and churches of marble, with its theatres and public edifices, with its gardens and piazzas, holds within itself all that the physical, religious, moral, and intellectual life of a capital requires. If, spite of this, it is but a lethargic city, without commerce, without enterprise, without life, political or intellectual, it may thank that curse of every enslaved country, foreign rule — that bane of every noble and independent ambition, despotism.

There is, indeed, something very woful in the position of Sicily. Cast there, in the Mediterranean Seas, it seems destined to be ever the prey of all their shores. Greece, Carthage, and Rome, in the ancient world, in the modern, the Arab, Spanish, and Norman conquerors, seem conjured against its liberties. And I have known liberal Neapolitans, who behold this result with satisfaction, in whose dreams of political freedom the independence of Sicily is not comprised, nay, who rejoice openly in the bitter subjection of this beautiful and unhappy country to their own land and race. Yet they

hate Austria with a mortal hate, resentfully they tell you of the pressure of her iron hand, undisguisedly they confess their abhorrence.

"My father," said a Neapolitan gentleman to me, "crosses over to the other side of the street when he meets an Austrian."

I thought this at the time about as good a specimen of national detestation as one could get; but, to my surprise, the same gentleman said to me in another conversation: —

"The Sicilians are a most perfidious people! They may seem quite friendly, but they always hate a Neapolitan in their heart."

Ay, just as the Neapolitan hates the German, who hates the Russian, who hates the Turk, who hates the Christian, and so on, ad infinitum, all the world over, and all the world over, too, there is the same naïve wonder in the mind of the oppressor at the preposterous hatred of the oppressed.

Of the feelings of the Sicilians towards the Neapolitans I have no personal knowledge. Tourists are, or ought to be, external observers. We came to Sicily "to look at it," to borrow the quaint

phraseology of a Scotch gentleman whom we met on the Amalfi, and no more.

We continued our ascent under a burning sun, wilder became the mountain, until it grew to be no more than a rock, sterile and stony, with little chapels scattered like resting-places on the way. At length we reached the church of Santa Rosalia.

It is built in the rock, and it looks damp and deserted. An old woman came out of one of the few dwellings that have gathered near the shrine, and asked for alms. She looked miserable enough. A grave-looking sacristan opened to us, and let us in. We crossed rooms with mouldy pictures and books, and entered a covered vestibule that precedes the church. It is supported by columns of an alabaster found in the mountains, but none the less stained and discoloured by damp. After this vestibule, comes a flagged open space of rude, primitive rock, with springs trickling down its sides, and the sky looking in through an opening above. Green shrubs edged it with verdure, and shed on the damp flags below lovely blue blossoms. A dark grotto, where a lamp burned feebly, yawned

beyond this. It looked mysterious and picturesque, we entered it; it was the church. Everyone knows the little that is known of Santa Rosalia. She was young, of illustrious birth, but she fled from home and kindred, from the world and its ties, to lead, in this bleak and lonely spot, a life of penitence and prayer. She is supposed to have been about sixteen when she died; her bones were found in the grotto upwards of two centuries ago; they were conveyed to the cathedral of Palermo, but a church was built on the spot she had inhabited, and an altar was raised beneath the hole in the rock where her remains had been found. The floor has been flagged, but the wall of rock is as damp and rude as when the young hermitess lived there. The priests, who say mass here, suffer grievously in health, said our guide. An iron railing surrounds the altar; near it, on the left, is a fine marble statue of the saint dying. The Florentine sculptor, to whom the task of representing her was given, certainly chose as his model some Palermitan lady. The soft, girlish face of the saint belongs, beyond doubt, to the aristocratic Sicilian

beauty. Somewhere behind the altar, in the gloom of the rock, there flowed water from a mountain spring. It fell in a stone basin furnished with an iron cup. Our little ciuciaro was hot and thirsty. He had walked some miles up a steep mountain in the burning sun; his sallow face and bare arms glistened with perspiration. He went to the stone basin, dipped in his arm in search of the iron cup, brought it out, and took a long drink with something like relish. I was shocked to see steam rising from his arm, as we may see it with some overwrought beast of burden, and when we left the church, I reprimanded him for his imprudence. He only smiled, and said, a little superciliously: —

“Perhaps it would hurt *you*,” (they all have a profound contempt for the comfortable, prudent, effeminate foreigner); “*we* are used to it.”

“Yes,” said the sacristan, “*they* are used to it.”

I had seen too much of the extraordinary things in the way of privation, suffering, and endurance, to which Italians are used, to doubt or combat the assertion.

There was no more to see — I looked out for Mount Etna most unavailingly — for we did not feel tempted to climb up to the telegraph which rises above the church, so we descended. The views were finer, I think, than when we went up; but they were seen a second time, and the first vivid impression was lost.

I again attempted to extract information from our little Ciuciaro — to get at the names of buildings and places — but vainly. He preserved to the end his apathy, which did not seem stupidity, or anything like it. When we parted from him at the door of the hôtel, we gave him, besides the price we had agreed on with his master, a silver coin for himself. He did not thank us, but looked calmly at the money in his hand.

“There, boy, go with your money,” impatiently said the master of the hôtel, gently pushing him out; “and remember that no foreigner ever gave you, or ever will give you, so much again.”

From this, we perceived that we had been guilty of extravagant generosity. He had walked

something like ten or twelve miles, if not more, on a sun-burnt mountain, on a broiling day, and we had given him eightpence.

SECOND CHAPTER.

Public Walks.

THE next day was Festa, and we saw Palermo in holiday attire and in holiday places. The day was fine, and the Toledo was full of groups. We followed a stream that went from the Quattro Cantoni to Porta Macqueda, and beyond it to one of the promenades of the town — the English Garden, it is called, though what there is English about it would perplex any one to discover.

Most un-English is the road that leads to it — a well-built street, with churches, fine houses, shabby shops, almost all open, and carrying on a thriving business, though it was Sunday; very pretty Palermitan ladies, or rather girls, for I did not see a handsome woman above twenty-five, in French bonnets and cloaks, or, when they belonged to the middle class, with the becoming black lace veil, which here, as in Naples, has been left by the Spaniards; fine men, all smoking; little open

carriages, elegant enough when they were public vehicles, and shabby enough when they were private; stately palaces, with wide courtyards and open gates, outside of which, in the street, lazy-looking girls were sitting, and getting their black hair combed out by some kind neighbour; all this, with a moderate sprinkling of priests in black, was as unlike Oxford Street on a Sunday morning as the Giardin Inglese was unlike Kensington Gardens.

Providence is bountiful to every land. She has given to England the growth of stately trees, the verdure of majestic lawns, the calm beauty of culture and taste. To Sicily she has given the luxuriance of flowers, and with them a boundless treasure of lovely things. Place the Giardin Inglese in England, and it is not worth mention; but leave this English-named though most Sicilian of gardens where it is, and it is enchanting. The road to it, Porta Macqueda being left behind, passes through orchards sunk down below it on either side, and lying, therefore, fully exposed to the view. I never saw anything more beautiful, not yet half so beautiful.

Holiday rest had fallen on these silent gardens, and only now and then we saw a comfortably-attired peasant, walking in an alley of orange-trees, or children lying in the grass, and gathering the loveliest of wild-flowers. The orange, the lemon, the cactus, grew there, with the white-blossomed fruit-trees of the north. Cedars, and pines, and roses red, luxuriant and plentiful as in June, twining round the trunks of trees, scarcely made these enchanting spots more lovely. The Giardin Inglese itself was not more beautiful, though laid out merely as a flower-garden. It is but a few years old, and there are no tall trees, but the flowers are enough to make one wish oneself a botanist. Their look — half-tropical, half-Eastern, the splendour of their colouring, the luxuriance and height to which they grew, amazed me.

We sat down under the shelter of a yellow-flowered shrub, for the sun was hot; and looking at it more closely, I remembered a tiny, delicate flower I had nursed in pots in England. This was it, now growing tall as a tree, and waving its long bows with mingled grace and pride in the soft spring breeze.

As for the roses, they were so plentiful that boys and girls plucked them, unchecked by the keepers, and, with a wantonness that pained me, threw them in the paths almost as soon as gathered.

We were not long in going over the whole of the Giardin Inglese, for though it has winding alleys, and ups and downs, and artificial caves and rocks (this taste, which is passing away elsewhere, is apparently new here), it is by no means large. Yet its smallness is scarcely felt. No high walls guard it; it seems to lie like an island of flowers in the surrounding country, and the beautiful sparkling sea to the left, the wild, abrupt lines of Monte Peregrino and other farther mountains that surround it, give to the eye that sense of distance and space, without which there is no beauty.

The other public walks of Palermo are a raised terrace by the beach, a beautiful drive below it, adorned with statues of the Bourbon Kings, which were thrown down in 1848, both commanding delightful views of sea, shore, and mountain, and

beyond these a large enclosed garden, and a botanical garden adjoining it.

Villa Giulia, or the Public Garden, as it is called, is a pretty place, but its flowers have not the luxuriance, nor yet the liberty of the roses and the blooming shrubs of the English garden. Straight walks, with clipped trees, parterres, fountains, aviaries, with now and then a blue or purple glimpse of mountain and sky, describe it pretty well. But it has two features that disgrace it. A lone little fountain, where the water falls over green niches, in which fresh nosegays are placed every day — and the effect of those flowers, seen through a sheet of crystal, is charming, they look like enchanted princesses — is disfigured by hideous images, which surround it, in features and attitudes distorted by physical pain. The sight is abominable. It is the worship of ugliness, and consequently of immorality. Degradation can sink no deeper.

If we must have statues to grace and guard our gardens, let them be such as can give pleasure to the eye or food to the mind. We need not, as

our own ancestors have done, necessarily borrow the images of a decayed faith. Have we not saints and heroes, the honour of our race? Have we not sovereigns, good or evil, to mark eras in our history? Have we not men, illustrious by their genius and their triumphs, such men as those whom the good taste and the honourable pride of the Romans have placed on the Pincio? In that beautiful garden of the noblest of cities, the walks and arbours are adorned with marble images and busts of the great and intellectual Italians. Their fine, reflective heads command attention, and leave to the mind a memorial and a lesson.

This is the modern feeling.

The generations that preceded us, and who have left us their gardens, felt differently; but though it may not have been consistent for Christian nations to adorn, as they have adorned, their palaces, their walks, and their gardens, with the images of a heathen and fallen faith, it was not at least debasing.

There was grace in the nymph and her urn; virgin liberty, the fleetness of the chase, the free-

dom of mountains and of woods, were embodied in the huntress, Diana. Apollo spoke of beauty and of song; there was majesty in the calm front and mystic trident of Neptune; a meaning in the diadem of towers which bound the solemn brows of Cybele; we may not, indeed we cannot, have felt all that the old worship held of tender and grave, our minds may have been tainted with what it contained of light and free; but if it could not give us the solemnity of religion since our faith has gone to another altar, if it could not help lowering our moral sense since it acknowledged a standard of purity which cannot even be mentioned with our own, it gave us, at least, great and wonderful beauty, an ideal of physical loveliness which has not been surpassed. But what can such images as these give us save degradation? Unless my memory is at fault, many of the grotesque figures in the Ducal gardens of Boboli are open to the same censure.

The other object, which it is impossible to overlook in the Public Garden of Palermo — indeed, which has been set there for general instruc-

tion — is what may be called an imitation cemetery. No inconsiderable portion of ground has been planted with cypresses and funereal trees, and adorned with tombstones, mostly of paltry plaster, but supposed to look like marble, and supposed to convey a solemn or pathetic feeling to the beholder. The place conveys, indeed, a very sad lesson, but not that which was intended. Is it not pitiable to remember that there should have been a school of sentiment like this — that the poetry, the literature, the very pleasures of an epoch, should have been sullied with falsehood so barefaced?

Imaginary graves are simply ridiculous, for imagination never can succeed in putting anything underneath them. We know, all the time, that there are no ashes in that urn — that no human heart like ours, once passionate and ardent, now cold and silent, lies mouldering beneath that grass-grown earth. We know it, and knowing it, we cannot be moved — we can even learn no lesson. Very different indeed is the impression we receive from real graves. It may be bitter, it may come

to us when we want to forget death and the brevity of life, it may be associated with feelings we do not share, with habits we do not sanction, but death is present, and we are submissive.

The Swiss, who gave to the last century and to the beginning of this more sentimentality than was good for either, have a custom which is by no means pleasing. They often bury the dead in their gardens. Madame de Staël and all her family are buried at Coppet. M. de Sellon, a philanthropic gentleman of Geneva, likewise desired to be buried in his garden by the lake. We visited that garden a few years ago. The house was closed up, the family would not live in it, they felt the presence of the grave in its melancholy bower; they would not let it, lest desecration should come near a spot sacred to them — an aspect of gloom, of silence, of solitude, had fallen on one of the most beautiful and cheerful dwellings of that beautiful place. And why? Because it held the grave of a good, religious, and harmless man.

The intrusion of the dead on the living is

neither in good feeling nor in good taste. Moreover, one generation may tolerate it, but the next, like Leonore in the German ballad, will say, "Let the dead be!" Will all the fame of the Neckers and the Staëls sanctify for ever the garden of Coppet? Will no impatient descendant long to put forth his illustrious but intrusive ancestors? Why should the dead be found in the paths of life? The church, the Campo Santo of the south, the churchyard of the north, are their place. How movingly, how piercingly they speak to us thence, we have all felt — we all know.

When we were in Rome, we went to visit the Franciscan convent of San Pietro in Montorio. From the terrace in front of the convent there was a fine view of Rome, with the glassy Tiber, the wide campagna, the ruins, and the circling hills, many still white with snows that never reached the plain, and yet it was not to look at that splendid prospect that we had come. We wanted to see the grave of the famous O'Neill, who is buried in the church — famous once, at least. Who cares now for the fallen of a fallen cause? He died in

Rome two hundred and fifty years ago, old, blind, forgotten. He had out-lived his fortunes, his greatness, and his fame. Dying, he asked to be laid here; and as a last distinction to the descendant of kings and to the champion of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the request was granted.

When we entered the church, I looked eagerly at all the monuments, and I forgot that monuments are not for exiles. At length, I found two plain slabs in the floor — on one was the red hand of the O'Neills; on the other, a cross in a shield, and the name of O'Donnell. What the tombs wanted in splendour, two Latin epitaphs made up in length. By whom had they been indited? By some persecuted Irish priest, by some fellow-exile and sorrowful survivor? If O'Neill could not lie in Irish earth, some Irish dust was, at least, laid by his. He and his companions were buried, not in a vault, since they had right to none of those existing, but side by side, and within two feet, at the utmost, of the pavement on which I knelt to read the inscription.

A mild Franciscan monk, who knew nothing

of these graves, save that travellers now and then asked to look at them, stood by me, telling me, in his low, subdued voice, how much San Pietro had suffered during the last war. It was a strong position, attacked by the French, and defended by the Italians. The horses of Garibaldi trod over O'Neill's last bed, and the cannon of the French soldiers shattered the last roof of the old warrior, and moved not the dull ear of the dead.

I had read about O'Neill, as everyone has read. I knew that, though a patriot, he was a man rather great than good, learned in the craft taught at the Court of Elizabeth, a subtle schemer, a remorseless politician, a man who attempted to found a dynasty, and to add another nation to the nations of Europe, but it was cold historical knowledge; something remote and vague, which the consciousness of a few bones and a little human dust below the marble floor made almost painfully present and too keenly vivid.

There are few persons within whose experience something of the kind does not occur. I have had churchyards described to me, which I

have never seen, and which I know quite well. The impression conveyed to the speakers was so strong, that, without effort, in a few graphic words, they gave it clear and distinct as a picture. The green mounds, the low uneven graves, the red sunlight passing away, the ivied church and evening sky, came before me with every word.

But these strong impressions are real, not factitious; truth alone can produce them; imposition, falsehood, pretence, are as unavailing as they are insolent and presuming. The false tombs and false cemetery of the Public Garden of Palermo can only move a very painful sort of derision in the mind of the beholder.

The Botanical Garden, which an iron railing separates from the Public Garden, is a pretty, well-kept place, full of fine plants; but very like most botanical gardens. One fact, however, reminded us very forcibly that we were in Sicily. We saw palm-trees growing in the open air, in Eastern vigour and beauty, and a low, sickle little holly plant in a pot.

THIRD CHAPTER.

Norman and Moorish Relics.

WE had seen the largest and richest churches of Palermo, we now went exploring the smaller, but not least interesting, temples of the city. Two are pre-eminently beautiful in that mixed style which is the characteristic of Palermo. The Martorana, which belongs to a convent of Benedictine nuns, and the Cappella Palatina, in the Royal Palace.

The Martorana was silent and quiet when we entered it; a sort of half gloom lingered under the arches sustained by columns of oriental granite; a nun was praying behind the wide grating above; quaint and stiff figures looked out at us from the ancient mosaic pictures that adorned two of the side altars. The nave was built in the mixed styles of the Arab and the Norman, both so light and so elegant. The walls and the high altar were magnificent with mosaic; lapis lazuli, verde antique,

porphyry, pictures embrowned by time and gilding, old and rich, gave a sense of gorgeousness without brightness.

Still finer is the Cappella Palatina in the Royal Palace, which stands by Porta Nuova. A wide sun-burnt place fronts this building, which was begun by the Saracens, continued by the Normans, and rebuilt by the moderns. It has preserved no external traces of its origin, and has long ceased to be the abode of Sicilian Kings. It is guarded by soldiers and cannon, but open to every one. We ascended a large staircase of red Sicilian marble, and after a few inquiries, found our way to the chapel. It was built by King Roger the Second in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, and it is a splendid monument of the magnificence of the Norman sovereigns. This chapel is small; here a royal family might worship; it was never meant for a crowd to fill up its narrow nave, and invade its stately quietness. Mass was being said as we entered; we waited until it was over, and the few kneeling women were gone, to look more at leisure.

But what can the mind carry away from one visit to such spots! The very patterns of the mosaic would take days to know them rightly; for, be it said, *en passant*, there is this distinction between mediæval and more modern mosaics, that the former vary infinitely, and avoid repetition, satisfied if the whole be harmonious; and that the latter seek harmony in the endless repetition of one or two ideas.

But if stray tourists and casual travellers are, perforce, reduced to brief and fugitive visits, they become all the more alive to general impressions; and the Cappella Palatina impresses itself on the mind in a way not to be forgotten. Small, elegant, its light arches supported by fine marble columns, its walls of richly-coloured mosaic and pavement of variegated marbles absorbing the light they receive from windows, high, narrow, and deep, it is a mass of gorgeousness half-veiled in gloom. Here, indeed, colour reigns supreme. How hateful to our ancestors seem to have been the cold white and the dull grey we have adopted in our churches. In the lands of marble, they had splendid mosaic;

in colder climes, that can yield but stone to the builder, they painted that stone, and made it bright with azure, vermillion, and gold. The mosaic cemented in the walls has resisted modern improvements, and held its place good; but it has not been imitated, or the imitation has been so cold that it bears sufficient witness to the altered taste. Colour was more easily conquered. The vivid hues have been washed over and effaced before their natural decay. The celestial blue, spangled with stars of gold, the rich purple, and deep green of the fresco, have been hidden under a cold and glaring white. Colour has vanished, and great has been the triumph.

There are Arabic inscriptions on the columns of the Martorana, and the roof of the Cappella Palatina is said to be inlaid with them; but what these inscriptions prove — the existence of these buildings under the Saracens, or the use of the conquered language by the conqueror, when victory was still recent, I do not know. The learned interpreter of the inscriptions in the Martorana has declared them to be Christian, and to refer to the church and its founder.

The royal palace is close by Porta Nuova, and beyond that gate, though not far out of Palermo, stands the palace of the Zisa, a real Saracen edifice, which has altered but little since it was erected, and which we now went to see.

The Zisa hides herself like a Moorish lady, as she is; winding lanes, edged with high walls, and spanned by arches of yellow stone, at length led us to her. We saw a closed church-door — a solitary, unpaved place, green with weeds, garden walls, and a square-looking, red-stone building rising high. This was the Zisa. The front of this Saracenic mansion had an arched and grated door, on which linen was drying, and through the bars of which we could see a Moorish little hall within. Dust and dirt defiled it, yet it had a graceful and airy look. The ringing of a bell soon brought the custode, a silent, middle-aged woman, who let us in.

This little hall is all that is left within of the Eastern character of the Zisa, but it is charming. Steps lead up to a pleasant portico; beyond, an arch, supported by two white marble columns,

opened the hall; the walls and the floor were inlaid with marble; the former bore traces of frescoes painted there in latter times, but now broken like decaying plaster, effaced, all but gone.

In the wall facing the entrance, there was a fountain. A streamlet of water should have flowed thence into a narrow channel in the floor, but the fountain head was sealed and dry; only the bottom of the stone conduit had preserved enough moisture to feed the maiden's hair that grew on the sides. The roof of this graceful little place is sculptured in the shape of a hollow pine-apple, and it is still pierced with the small trellised lattices that allowed the Eastern and Spanish beauties, who successively inhabited the Zisa to look down at what passed below, and enjoy the grateful freshness of the fountain or the air from the piazza.

Nothing else of the Eastern owners is left in the Zisa; but it is high, and from its terraced roof there is a view that is famous. Preceded by our silent guide, we went up a neglected staircase, and caught glimpses of dreary vacant rooms, only fit for ghosts who are light and airy, and require more

space than comfort or furniture, yet inhabited, we were told, by some dilapidated nobleman of the land.

We reached, at last, the highest platform, past even the deserted pigeon-house, which has long lost its tenants. It was noon, clear, hot and brilliant. Before us, beyond the roofs and spires of the city, lay the sea, sparkling and bright; everywhere else mountains enclosed the plain of Palermo, and below us, waving, as it seemed, to the very base of the Zisa, spread green gardens of orange and lemon-trees. Our silent guide spoke almost for the first time.

"Ah! in another month," she said, "what a scent there will be!"

The words conjured up a host of visions. The hall was fair and polished; crystal water flowed from the fountain, light and cheerfulness entered the waste rooms; the piazza was no longer mere waste ground, but a paved and seemly enclosure, and everywhere, from the farthest gardens, there came the perfume of orange-trees in bloom. Who would not live in the Zisa — in a real Moorish palace, within view of a Sicilian city?

FOURTH CHAPTER.

Around Palermo.

WE had seen as much of Palermo as tourists can see. We now went to look around it, and began with one of the favourite bournes of travellers, Bagaria.

The weather had changed; the day was bleak and stormy; a keen March wind swept along the road by the sea, and moaned away to the hilly coast before us; heavy grey clouds hung on the mountains, and lowered there; we saw Sicily under a new aspect, yet it had its beauty. The road had that wild look which cloudy skies give to solitary places; put sunshine here, and it will be lonesome no more; take away the sun, and solitude becomes solemn and sad.

Heavy green waves beat on the beach to our left, then stretched away to a swollen horizon, where gleams of light shone through the darkness of the sky, to our right, rose low, squalid-looking

houses, or when we left villages behind and entered the open country, a hedge of distorted cactuses defended the cultivated fields; with them often mingled wild-looking aloes, and often, too, the parasite plant, torn from the ground it had invaded, was cast in wrath on the stones of the road.

Sometimes the landscape took another aspect. We lost sight of the sea; orchards of tender fruit-trees, white with blossom, veiled it, and hid the winding line of coast; the tropical cactus and aloes yielded to hedges of grey laurels, tall, slender, and rustling; they bent before the blast with frail grace, and made one think of Eurotas and Grecian plains. Once, I remember, the sky cleared and the whole scene changed. The sun pierced a cloud and shone with burning splendour; the wind fell; the road became dusty and hot. We drove by a cart, which, strange sight to our unaccustomed eyes, had taken refuge beneath a cactus. Under the shade of its gigantic arms, horses and carmen were alike at rest.

This was but a passing brightness; the sky soon

darkened again, and freshness returned to the air. The road offered but little variety; we went once through a small village with better houses than we had yet seen, a church and a shed-like building, on the walls of which was pasted a rude print of indescribable figures, and below it the intimation that Samson, a drama, would be acted that evening; seats two grani each. After this we took a road that turned away from the sea, and passed through a melancholy landscape. A bad road, felled timber, decayed palaces, given to the soldier, with the consent of the landlords, too poor to keep them in repair — I had charitably supposed that government had taken them by force — heightened that desolate aspect.

At length we reached a decent-looking little town, with good houses, a church or two, straggling children and women spinning at their doorways or on the balconies. The street was broad and steep, and we drove slowly; we were arrived, moreover, for this was Bagaria. A tall, dry man came up to the carriage as it drew up before the villa, and opening it, helped us to alight.

"I am so glad," he said, as if he had known us all his life; "you will see Etna quite well. This way, ladies, this way."

The gate was open; we entered an open space where there were a few bright flowers; a woman who held a bunch of keys joined us, and ushered us in. I was too intent on Etna to think much of the house.

"Show me Etna," I said to the man. "Have you a telescope?"

He winked knowingly, and begged me to be patient. I should see Etna with or without a telescope as I pleased, but first I must see the house.

This villa is the finest around Palermo — travellers are bound to go to it, as they are bound to go to Santa Rosalia. Its owner, a descendant of Spanish grandees, had not long been dead when we went, and had bequeathed it to the poor. It was accordingly on sale, and a good round sum, though the exact amount has escaped my memory, was asked for it.

A more comfortless dwelling I never saw. We

were shown rooms with marble tables and glass ceilings, and marble family portraits of stiff-looking ladies with marble ruffs, and formal ancestors with marble beards. There was also, I remember, a narrow, straight, bench-like couch, covered with cloth of gold, which the woman held as an inestimable treasure; but a luxurious chair to sleep or dream in — a convenient piece of furniture — I could not see. Two things, however, excited the raptures of the tall man — a glass ceiling, which was ugly by day, whatever it may have been by night, and which, according to him, cost fabulous sums, as the French say, and an agate table which decorated the centre of the saloon, and was a suitable accompaniment to the marble portraits and the golden couch. Save that this table was made of small pieces of Sicilian agate, I could see no beauty in it. With the mosaics of Florence and Rome, it could not compare; but the tall man was smitten with it.

“There is not another like it in all Sicily,” he told me. “An Englishman saw it, he insisted on buying it; the marchese replied, ‘Then give its weight in gold?’ Ha, ha!”

To this decent proposal, the Englishman, I suppose, returned a prudent denial, or we should not have had the privilege of seeing this precious table.

Another Englishman — they get the credit for everything — the woman declared, wanted to carry away the cloth of gold couch; but this I feel certain must have been an invention, as no one could possibly covet such an ungainly little creature.

So absorbed was the tall man in pointing out these and other marvels of art, that he forgot all about Etna; but I did not, and asked to be shown the volcano forthwith.

"Of course, at once," he replied, most complacently.

He led us to a window, and extended his hand. I saw the mountains which I had seen from Palermo, and asked to be told which was Etna.

"Ah! we shall see it better from the telegraph," replied the tall man. "I perceive the sky has got clouded."

This looked suspicious, and very much as if Etna had been a lure and a deceit; but, making the best of it, we asked to see the garden of the villa. We were taken to a terrace branching off into two staircases, each of which led below, and we were informed by the woman that we had seen villa, garden, and all, and that we might now be generous. I could not believe in the absence of the garden, for, in this luxuriant country, I had conjured up a vision of orange, and myrtle, and laurel-groves, but it was a fact. The Sicilian noble had a large villa, an agate table, a couch of gold cloth, glass ceilings, and all sorts of luxuries, but no garden. The sea breeze and fine views sufficed him. We paid the custode — our tall man turned out to be a guide and impostor, who had nothing to do with the villa — and we gave her the same sum which we had given the silent keeper of the Zisa, who was satisfied with it; but there are different tempers in this world, or circumstances make people different — the splendour of the place she showed and guarded had affected this lady. She received our offering with a scream of horror and

disgust, turned up her nose at it, and finally pocketed it, which was the wisest thing she could do. We bore this with the professional calmness of travellers.

We had had even a greater affront at La Cava. Our two donkey-men loftily returned the drinking money we gave them. They could not take it, they assured us — it was too little. We knew that the contrary was the case, having made ourselves acquainted with all such details; but we took back the money. Half an hour elapsed, and the cameriere entered our room, smiling. The men, finding us unmoved by time, had sent him for their buona mano.

The view from the telegraph was wide and fine, but the sullen sky that hung over plain, mountain, and sea, though it produced a striking effect — such an effect as painters love — concealed many features of the landscape. I was still anxious about Etna, and asked the tall man to point it out.

“Why, there it is,” he replied, again extending his hand towards the distant range of mountains.

We looked and questioned until we were tired, and at length elicited the following truths: — Behind one of the mountains there rose a faint streak of smoke that seemed to melt with the greyness of the sky — that was, and is, all that can be seen of Etna from Palermo. For imaginative travellers it is, no doubt, ample; for matter-of-fact people, who want a mountain to be a mountain, and not, as I believe Mr. Leigh Hunt has called it, a “big impostor” — it is a hollow and miserable delusion.

We despondently asked the tall man what else there was to see?

“More villas, if we pleased,” he promptly replied; “but we had seen the best.”

We declared ourselves satisfied, paid and discharged him; and drove home along the melancholy road by the beach.

The next day was brilliant and hot as a July day. It was Festa, too; we drove up the Toledo, alive with an idle crowd, passed beneath the arch of Porta Nuova, and went, up hill almost the whole way, to Monreale. Mists of heat half veiled the

purple mountains, but could not conceal the rich and luxuriant country they enclosed; fields, orchards, country houses, gave it a look of prosperity and ease, which the merry little beggar-children who teased us for alms as the carriage drove slowly up, did not contradict, at least in appearance. They were brown, stout, and good-humoured. The elder one, a girl of ten, with bare feet, sunburnt hair, and a very plain face, but eyes like dark diamonds, and ivory teeth, had a plentiful share of ready wit. She beat all our arguments for not giving her the penny she wanted; and when she had obtained it, she thanked us with wild and graceful motions, with looks and smiles, and benedictions, both fantastic and overwhelming; but all conveying such an extraordinary sense of brightness that I thought I had never seen so radiant a little creature. I do not believe it was for her beauty King Cophetua fell in love with the beggar-maid; he had seen dames as fair, and maidens more seemly, in his court; no, he felt dull when she appeared before him, wild, merry and free, like our little Sicilian maiden. After

lingering awhile near us, to show proper gratitude, she fell in the rear with the little brother, whose hand she held, and waylaid another carriage.

Monreale looks a miserable, dirty little town, but the interior of the cathedral is splendid; I should have liked to put it in the duomo of Palermo. How well those gorgeous mosaics would look within that burning yellow pile; and what a clothing that majestic old church would make for the marvels we now saw. High mass was being sung as we entered. Solemnly the organ pealed through nave and aisles; the altar blazed with the light of wax candles; the sun was streaming through the tall windows; a bright beam lit in a remote chapel two tombs — one was that of William the Good, founder of the church. The walls were covered with magnificent mosaics, representing in vivid hues, unfaded by time, scriptural histories. They followed in endless succession, as quaint and strange as ever a lover of Byzantine art need wish. Mass was over, and we were looking at them, when an eager man waylaid us.

“This way, this way, signore. I am the custode.”

We declined his services, but he insisted peremptorily; telling us he was the keeper of the church. There never was a more impudent plea; the church-doors were wide open; the place was full of people, and was as free and as public as need be; but, for all that, the custode haunted our steps, until he fell back out of very weariness, and let us be quiet.

Only an archæologist can do adequate justice to Monreale, and decide how far its architecture is Greek or Arabic, or both; or whether Byzantine, Norman, or native artists clothed its walls with those mosaics, over which time has not prevailed.

There is a legend that William the Good having gone hunting on the mountain and fallen asleep beneath an oak-tree, had a dream, in which the blessed virgin appeared to him, and commanded him to build a church on the spot; hence, says tradition, the church and the name, Mount Royal.

The Sicilian sovereigns were munificent to this little town and its cathedral; and the Sicilian nobles followed the example. Rich marble chapels, built

at the cost of the families whose names they bear and whose dead they keep, are a lasting memorial of the munificent spirit of the old aristocracy; the sums spent on these chapels must have been immense; they are masses of mosaic, but of modern mosaics; splendid, but without the striking character which the old Greek artists impressed on the labour of their hands.

We lingered long in this remarkable church, the finest in this part of Sicily; we went outside to see, as well as a grating would allow us, the fine bronze gates by the Pisan Bonarmo, a relic of the twelfth century, to which the whole church belongs, and here we were waylaid by another importunate. She was a child of eight or ten; with a soft and delicate complexion; tender and beautiful dark eyes, and a bewitching face and smile. She came to us timidly enough, not asking alms, for she was not a beggar, and was cleanly dressed, but looking longingly at us, as if we were so much walking money, which we, no doubt, were in her opinion, and out of which she would, not unnaturally, like to have a trifle.

The roof of the cathedral of Monreale was, unfortunately, burned a few years ago and fragments of the consumed mosaics are abundant. Our little solicitor drew from her pocket a handful of the coloured and gilt cubes of glass, and asked us if we would not purchase.

We forgot the gates of Bonarmo to talk with this beautiful child, one of the most beautiful we had ever beheld. She had looks and smiles, child-like, but such as I have never seen with a child, so expressive and gay through all their sweetness. We bought her memorials of the cathedral, and made her happy with a few grains. Her face beamed with delight; with the prettiest and most graceful gestures she bade us adieu, and ran off to tell her good fortune to her mother, who lived hard by.

There is a fine cloister in the Benedictine Monastery of Monreale, but as ladies are not admitted, we did not go; the same objection prevented us from visiting San Martino, which is farther on; we simply drove back to Palermo. The road was all down-hill this time, and can only be described

as a succession of the finest views eye ever saw, with mountain to enclose, and the horizon of the sea to bound them.

As we approached Palermo — Monreale is only four miles away — our coachman asked if he should not take us to see some of the private gardens of the wealthy Palermitans. We assented. He drove us to a handsome country-house, and drew up at the open gate. We alighted, entered, and were admitted into a small, but exquisite garden, laid out in what is called the English style; divided only from this garden is another, belonging to Princess Butera-Radali, but requiring an order for admission. We procured one the next day, and as the two gardens, which are only divided by an iron railing, are alike in character and aspect, one account will do for both.

We saw it after the Favorita, which we visited two days before we left, and with these two places, closed, alas, our pleasant stay in Palermo.

The Favorita is the Royal country residence. Here the exiled Bourbons lived, whilst Murat sat on the throne of Naples. It cannot then have been

handsome, and now it is a melancholy deserted country house, royal but in name.

The day was clouded, and a heavy shower of rain was falling as we went through the rooms. Small, poorly, almost shabbily furnished they were; royalty here had been careless of its state; English-coloured prints, representing a series of domestic scenes — I remember the wedding of a lady with a very short waist — were the works of art that adorned the walls. A few family portraits, with sentimental mottoes, now as much out of date as the fashions of the English engravings, spoke of domestic feelings, which, in high or low, ask for privacy and the respect of the stranger.

The smallness of the rooms, in this country especially, where size represents air, and consequently comfort, was surprising, and gave the whole place a dark and unpleasant look, heightened, perhaps, by the rain, which still fell heavily. It had ceased by the time we reached the belvedere that crowns the house. The heavy sea, the gloomy mountains, the plain, and Palermo lay before us. When we turned our back to the city, we saw,

beyond the verdure of the grounds, Monte Peregrino, rising near and high. The sea swept away from it to our right, and, flowing around it, though unseen, appeared again on the other side, between two purple ridges. Stormy was that glimpse; a bark tossed on the swollen waves, and seemed going for ever away to a white and misty horizon; but in sunshine, under a cloudless sky, I could imagine what a sheet of azure, with white-sailed barks, would meet the eye.

We had seen the house; we went down and drove through the grounds. Poor in trees, in verdure, in beauty, we found them. Ah! one must not have seen Windsor or Richmond Park, to look at these thin and stunted copses with pleasure; admiration is out of the question; we passed through a circular opening adorned with fountains, which may have been pretty in their day; they were now decaying, and green with mildew; they flowed no more in sparkling showers, but had just enough water left to cover the ground with sluggish pools, where frogs had found a home. Everything else was silent, solitary, and desolate-looking.

The day was too wet for us to go and visit the gardens of Principessa Butera-Radali; but as the next day was once more fine and clear, and as propitious as one need wish, we went.

This garden seemed an earthly paradise to me when I saw it, and now I find that, when I must describe it, it is very like any handsome, well laid out, carefully cultivated garden, very like, save in one important feature — climate. Here was the enchantment — to see growing freely, unsheltered by glass prisons, unfostered by the heat of stove or steam, the beautiful trees and flowers which, in our colder countries, are associated with prison-like confinement and suffocating heat.

The day was mild and lovely; the palmtrees waved in the air with mingled majesty and grace; the once famous papyrus raised its feathered head above the little streamlet in which it grew; the bamboo shed its thick, shining scales on the grass; the cypress-alley had a pleasant gloom; the geranium grew to the height of a tree; the magnolia, the orange, the lemon, the yocca, were in all their strength and beauty. Anemones of every colour

sparkled in the grass; flowers, exquisite and strange, everywhere grew in infinite variety; and a hour spent in this beautiful place, which seemed shut out from Palermo and the mountains, like any garden of Irem in the wilderness, passed like a few moments. We left it at length, but to remember it long.

This country-house, the most beautiful near Palermo, was inhabited, in 1845 and 1846, by the imperial family of Russia. Trees planted by them still flourish luxuriantly around that home, which changes and years will scarcely make them forget.

We had seen all. We left the next day, and had a touch of Sicilian comedy to enliven our departure. The coachman who took us to Bagaria, a hoarse, squinting man, had asked us if we were soon going, and if we should not prefer driving to the steamer, instead of crossing the whole port in a boat, with the chance of being sea-sick if the weather was squally. We assented, and asked how much he would charge?

"Three carlini and a half for the drive," he said; "and I will get you a small boat to put you

on board for fifteen grains. I have got a boat," he added, explanatorily.

The charge was moderate (1s. 8d.) — it was not even the one-third of what we had paid to land — and it was quicker and more pleasant to drive in a carriage than to be rowed in an open boat, without protection from sun or rain. We agreed to take him.

"But, please," he added, as we parted, "do not speak of this to the master of the hotel. He would owe me a grudge for interfering."

We promised to be discreet; and it was only when we walked down-stairs with our luggage that we said we would drive to the steamer.

Our old friends the rowers were sitting on a bench at the door of the hotel waiting for us. We were the only travellers leaving. On hearing our resolve, they raised a shout. One rushed forward.

"What were we thinking of? We could not drive there — we must be rowed. He would take us for five — for four carlini a-piece!"

"How is it you made us pay six when we came?" I asked.

I received this unanswerable reply: —

"It is six for landing, and four for embarking. It is the *tariffa*."

Our squinting friend, who looked as demure as a Quaker, here drove up, on a sign we made him.

Derisive and scornful questions assailed him as he helped us in: —

"Did he mean to drive us on board?" —

"What would he do with us at the *Dogana*?" —

"It was a fine thing to catch travellers so!"

"But he has got a boat of his own," I said, uneasily, and really alarmed at the prospect of being dropped on the port, and left there to be an object of dispute amongst Sicilian watermen.

They laughed at the idea of a coachman having got a boat, and jested him on the subject. He did not answer one word, but turning towards us as if to shove up a trunk, he squinted frightfully at me, from which I perceived that he had been guilty of an invention, and that I had committed

a slip of the tongue. I had time for no other error. We drove away, our friend the coachman turning round, as soon as the hotel was out of sight, to grin at us, and tell us hoarsely it was all right.

Numerous boatmen hailed us as we drove along the port; but it was only when we reached the Dogana that our conductor drew up, and picking out a waterman, began conducting a bargain on the most approved principles.

"How much do you want?" he asked of the owner of the boat.

"Four carlini," was the modest reply.

"Four carlini! — are you mad?"

"Say three carlini, then."

"Three! — you shall do it for fifteen grains."

This was received with an indignant shout, spite of which, the man came down to two carlini; but our coachman stuck to the fifteen grains, and a long squabble ensued, during which sundry winks informed us matters were progressing. The waterman, however, proving more obstinate and more noisy than our hoarse coachman had anticipated,

he got in a seeming great rage, dealt him out a volley of Sicilian adjectives, cracked his whip, and drove away furiously.

I thought him in a mighty passion — the Sicilians are a choleric race — but lest we should be deluded, he gave us a wink over his shoulder; but there was no need to lay open his tactics. The two boatmen were in full chase — they would do it for fifteen grains — and I believe they would have done it for ten, for boats are many, and passengers are few. The bargain was struck. We promised five grains, over and above, as buona mano; but with this our coachman would have nothing to do.

“I said you should have a boat for fifteen grains,” he declared stoutly, “and here it is. If the signore choose to give more, it is their own generosity.”

Lucky country! where one can be generous at so cheap a rate! With this, he bade us good-bye and a happy journey, and drove away, triumphant at his success.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Gardens of Naples.

EVEN after Palermo and its gardens, Naples is lovely. We have the Villa Reale, and its trees and flowers, the bay, the islands, Vesuvius towering above the city, and the coast white with those happy villages, where summer brings Paradise — easily discernible on its high cliffs is our much-loved Sorrento.

The objects of interest in and about Naples are many. Sight-seers may revel here; and even idle travellers, who hate being bored into looking at things, however beautiful, will have little trouble in seeing, without seeking to see. The Villa Reale is delightful just now.

The first time we saw it was three years ago, in the month of July. Cholera was raging in the city, and the sky, dull, misty, grey with heat, seemed laden with pestilence. I remember well the sullen look of Vesuvius, the leaden waves of

the sea, and, above all, the burnt-up, withered gardens of Villa Reale, so different from the pleasant arbours and smiling verdure of the Roman Pincio we had just left. But now the Villa Reale could compete and compare with the gardens of any land. It is young, green, and fresh. It seems to hold out wonderful promises for summer — its noon of life — promises which it will not fulfil. Spring showers and western winds have made it what it is; scirocco, hot and wasting, will soon wither that verdure which seems eternal, and profane the beauty of those luxuriant flowers.

Every one who has been to Naples knows what the Villa Reale is; but, alas! every one is not privileged to visit this beautiful country, and to those who have not gone so far south, and who have not read the accounts of travellers, Villa Reale is a name, and no more.

It is a public garden, long and narrow — it lies between the Chiaja and the sea. The Chiaja is a wide, well-built street, lined with hotels and palaces on one side, and on the other by the iron grating which runs along the Villa Reale. It faces

the gardens as Park Lane faces Hyde Park, and it is also the Hyde Park of Naples. Along the Chiaja, up and down, drive the carriages of native nobles and foreigners.

The stony pavement makes it a noisy drive; but, unless you feel inclined to get out into the country, you must go there. There is, I suppose, a sort of pleasure in this perpetual coursing up and down; but many prefer alighting from their carriages, and enjoying the freshness and verdure of the villa, delightful especially when evening comes on.

The villa is laid out in a style of its own. It opens with a broad walk of laburnums, open on the side of the sea for the amateurs of sea views, and adorned on the side of the Chiaja with parterres of flowers and beautiful little fountains of rock-work, screened by some of the finest aquatic plants. Here the majestic arum, lily white and stately, blooms in all its beauty.

A large, granite fountain from Poestum, and said to have within its ample cup a fine relievo head of the Medusa, of colossal size, for as I have

not seen it, I cannot speak from personal observation, closes the broad walk; winding alleys, flowers, statues, and two white and graceful little temples — one consecrated to Virgil, who was buried near Naples, the other to Tasso, who was born in Sorrento — vary and fill the centre.

After the delightful alleys, as they are called in the guide-book, comes an open platform by the sea, commanding magnificent views of the bay, the city, and Vesuvius, on one side; and on the other, of the low green hill of Pausilippo, that slopes down into the sea — a verdant promontory, behind which vanish the vessels whose course is northward. I can see no good reason why the end of the Villa Reale should not be as pretty and as pleasant as the beginning; but short and limited as it is, this garden has its aristocratic end; and there is no denying that, as it nears the populous part of the Chiaja, where fishermen live and dry their nets on the beach, it acquires a decidedly low look.

The visitors to the Villa vary much according to the hour of the day — nursery-maids and children

people it in the morning. The varied costumes of the former are very attractive. A handsome Swiss girl, a Bernese by her dress, displays to full advantage the grave, but becoming attire of her canton. Her round strawhat, long black skirt, square bodice, and plaited habit-shirt make her look as demure as a nun. In a very different style is the Neapolitan Balia. I never saw anything more magnificent than the costume of one of these women. She wore a blue satin bodice, with a heavy gold fringe; a blue satin skirt, embroidered with gold in the most gorgeous style; and a profusion of chains, necklaces, and rings, that covered her neck and her fingers. Her ear-rings were emeralds and pearls, and hung down to her neck.

We once saw another, attired in the same style, but in scarlet satin. Pink and white silk skirts are common wear with these ladies; but the most simply dressed of them all, the nurse of Prince Luigi's children, a woman of twenty-five or so, who wore a dark cloth skirt, and a body of violet and gold, was not merely the handsomest of them, but one of the handsomest women we saw in Italy.

She had the soft, dark eyes, veiled by long lashes, the straight, handsome features, the ripe complexion, the bearing, the smile, and the look of the beautiful Capri women. We often met her in the alleys by the sea, followed, like a queen of beauty as she was, by two stately footmen and one of the soldiers on duty in the gardens; and a look at the pale child she carried was enough to show it was none of hers.

The nephews and nieces of his Majesty are all fond of this place. There is a little princess of seven or eight, who wears a pink silk skirt, flounced to her waist, and sticking out from her diminutive person in the most approved style, who runs about trundling her hoop with great zeal. We met her, the other day, in one of the arbours, where she was sulking in a very ill humour. A little balloon had got lodged in a tree, and could not be got down. Without it, she would not go; and all the scolding of her governess could not make her royal highness leave the arbour without it. Her arm was irreverently pulled, but she sullenly lay down on the stone bench, evidently

prepared to resist to the last. We went on; and what extremities were resorted to in this difficult matter, is more than I know. A soldier guarded the entrance of the harbour against intruders — a wise precaution, for the Neapolitans are not a ceremonious people, and would not have minded looking on.

Children and nursery-maids are scarce in the evening; but we have foreigners and Neapolitan fashionables, who fill the broad alley, or linger on the benches. There is also a fair sprinkling of priests in black and monks in brown or white, not to speak of neat, bare-headed girls, in holiday attire, who come here with their lovers to have an evening walk. The foreigners, who are still fresh, linger about the picture-shops and the cafés — for there are both within the precincts of the gardens — the old hands walk up and down like the English family we meet every evening.

It consists of a meek-looking man in a low hat and white neckcloth, clerical beyond all doubt; of his wife, tall, a little faded, but still comely, and very simply attired; the minister's wife is written

in her aspect; of five daughters whom this worthy couple escort, — tall, straight, slim, fresh and fair girls, and demure. They all walk as much on the arm-in-arm system as the nature of the ground permits; they look neither right nor left, no more at the sea than at the temple of Virgil, and apparently take no more interest in the Villa, in Naples, or in anything they see, than if they were in Kensington Gardens. They are taking exercise, and there is an end of it. Very different are the German papa, mamma, and young lady we meet about the same hour. They are all three plain enough, but they wear that air of good humour and naïveté, which seems more characteristic of the Germans in this country of unfathomable looks and subtle smiles, than it might be elsewhere. The young lady has a good deal of colour, and blue eyes; she wears a round straw hat, short sleeves, long black mittens, and a white muslin frock. She has never been here before, and looks enthusiastic and ardent.

There are other varieties of the foreigner, but just now they are not interesting, or they are here

on a flying visit, and do not give one time to know them.

The Italian ladies are worth some attention. The Neapolitan women are, in general, painfully plain; they are large, coarse, heavy, without grace or softness; but when they choose to be handsome they are exquisitely so. Two sisters, one a girl, the other a child, visit the Villa every evening, accompanied by a lady who seems to be their mother. The elegant toilette of these ladies, and the handsome scutcheoned carriage from which they alight, indicate their high rank; they have a look of distinction, which sits well on them, and adds to their beauty. I cannot describe the face of the elder sister, who is about eighteen; she is pale, delicate, and fair, like a sylph, or rather like what we imagine a sylph to be; wit and caprice are written in her clear, expressive features; the graceful carriage of her head, her light and dainty step, would make one know her even at a considerable distance; she is small and slight, but, like Venus, her step betrays the goddess.

But this handsome girl, whose sister will be as

handsome in a few years, is an exception, and Neapolitan princesses, though dressed in the last Parisian fashion, are just as plain as the bare-headed girls who saunter here in the evening. They look forward and careless; I prefer to them the two old country women, whom we saw here the other evening, looking gravely at the statue of a satyr, Marsyas, I believe, fastened to the trunk of a tree. This strange figure puzzled them considerably. At length they came to the following definition of this odd being: —

“He is a Christian a-top,” said the wiser one of the two, “and an animal below.”

The Italians of the lower classes rarely call a man a man; he is a Christian; that says all.

Such is the Villa Reale, but royalty, naturally enough, has other gardens.

The official abode of the King is the palace not far from the port and the sea. Its gardens are sunk low, and, looking over a stone parapet, passengers may see the heaps of cannon-balls, which adorn the pleasure-grounds of this most warlike of the Bourbons. The King, however,

resides here but seldom. Mola di Gaeta, Caserta, the Favorita at Portici, and Capodimonte when it is requisite that he should be in Naples, are more agreeable abodes.

Capodimonte is visible from almost every part of Naples. The city is built on a narrow amphitheatre, between mountains and the sea, and the royal summer residence has been erected on one of the hills that overlook it. Freshened by sea and mountain air, it looks, and is, a delightful place to live in. It is but a plain, unadorned, though large mansion, not quite so ugly as Kensington Palace, but with very much of the same cold, formal look. It was erected in the age of cold architecture, a hundred and twenty years ago, by the best and the wisest of the kings who ruled Naples, Charles III. of Spain. The rooms within were formerly adorned with the splendid Farnese collection, but the Neapolitan sovereigns have generously given up to the public the enjoyment of these fine works of art, and the interior of Capodimonte now offers nothing worthy of note. The gardens, however, the grounds, which cover three miles, and are said

to afford plenty of game — we saw nothing but blackbirds and a dead serpent — and, above all, the views, which are varied and beautiful in the extreme, are delightful.

We took a carriage the other morning, and went to see this charming residence. We drove up the Toledo, the main street of Naples, and also the finest, beyond the Studiij, up a steep, open, sunny street, which ended in a bridge thrown above a ravine, and affording views of Vesuvius, sullen and blue, and of the mountains around us, as pleasant as spring verdure could make them. This is the charm of Italian cities — few of them but have the loveliness of nature, within view of the dense town.

From the ducal gardens of Boboli you see the picturesque hills, the gracefully-grouped villages that enclose Florence. The campagna — grand, austere, infinite, like an ocean of verdure, meets your look from the Pincio. You cannot walk ten minutes in Naples without catching a glimpse of some green mountain-side, of Vesuvius, of the bay. Alas! what do you see, beyond themselves, in two

of the largest cities of the world? What do you see in London, but London — in Paris, but Paris? The dew may lie bright and clear in Windsor Forest or in Richmond Park — the Seine may wind away by the low hills and verdant fields of Normandy, but in both Babylons there are hundreds who shall live and die, and know no more of nature than a London square or the Champs Elysées can reveal. The varied character of the ground in the central and southern towns of Italy prevents this; and to these daily aspects of nature — to this never forgetting of the presence of the gracious Divinity, may we not attribute much of the vague poetry, of the grace, and absence of vulgarity, which, as a general rule, distinguish the lower classes of these happy cities?

Beyond the bridge extended a pleasant suburb, consisting chiefly of villas buried in gardens, both climbing up-hill, and seeming, in their luxuriance and verdure, so many miniature Edens. At length, after a long ascent and numerous windings, we reached the iron gate which guards the entrance to the Bosco; and the king being then at Gaeta —

for when he is at home, visitors are not admitted, naturally enough — we were let in without an order, which we had neglected to provide; but as we did not neglect the silver key, which opens every door in this paradise, we got in easily enough. A little boy was sent to be our guide; but he knew nothing, and was useless. We soon sent him away, and went on alone.

It would be easy enough to criticize the Bosco. It is not very well laid out, the flowers and trees are not wonderful, and, for a royal place, it is decidedly neglected. But why criticize a spot which is, after all, so delightful? The morning was fresh and beautiful; the blackbird and the thrush were singing their gayest carols in the cool alleys; every time the trees opened, views that seemed borrowed from Tasso's gardens of Armida, from Psyche's delightful retreat on the mountain, charmed and arrested us. The bay, the city, the islands, the far promontory of Baia, the beautiful hills, where the flat and green pine grows by the side of the sombre cypress, the very sky veiled by a rosy atmosphere, all were a delight.

I have been told, that when the Emperor Nicholas visited and first saw Naples, he sighed, and said to his royal brother: —

“Better Naples than Saint Petersburg!”

Ah! well he might! — well he might!

We have visited two other gardens besides Capodimonte. One, the botanic garden, is open to the public on festa days, and to foreigners who wish to see the fine plants kept in the hot-house, on every day excepting festa. We were not aware of this, and went on a holiday, just as the gates had opened to admit a tumultuous crowd of boys and girls, who had poured out from all the populous streets around to enjoy the garden. They rushed up the steps, darted down the grass-grown alleys, and flew at the rose-trees, covered with white and red flowers. I never saw anything so rapid as the work of plunder. Every bush was a city taken by storm; and, as no defence was offered, sacking went on freely. Very soon the finest trees were bare. At first, it annoyed me; but when I remembered that they must have undergone the same plunder a few days before, and when I saw how little they

had suffered, and felt that, in another week, they would be as bright as ever, it seemed a pity to grudge the poor children their cheap and pleasant treat.

The botanical garden is sufficiently large, but carelessly kept. It looks a wild, neglected place; the alleys are damp, the tall trees spread an unhealthy gloom, the enclosures look fit for pasture, and would be much benefited, so far as neatness goes, by the introduction of an active kid or two; but there are pleasant places, too, beautiful roses, and a few interesting flowers. The greenhouse we could not visit, and our stay was but short.

The third great garden of Naples, and large and full it is, is the Campo Santo — the new and beautiful cemetery, which has replaced the burying in churches, which was customary formerly.

The day was sullen and stormy when we went, yet we thought we could venture as usual. We took one of the little open carriages which abound here.

“Do not be afraid of the weather,” said our

coachman, a dry, withered man, of fifty or so. And, relying on his assurance, away we drove.

Sunshine or storm are both beautiful; drizzling city rain alone is ugly, but we had not this to apprehend, we were sure of a good shower if the rain came. There is a real heartiness in the Italian climate; the sun burns, the wind pierces, the rain is a deluge. The road to the Campo Santo, which lies a good bit out of the city, is favourable for stormy effects. It climbs up-hill, surrounded by verdure and gardens, and overlooks the sea, with a vast expanse of sky and the heavy mass of Vesuvius ever visible.

The view is splendid, and is sufficient pleasure, but our coachman was either fond of talking, or desirous to impart information, for he did not remain five minutes silent. He was a through-bred Neapolitan, and his quaint, original speech, did not belie the meaning of his shrewd, brown face. His remarks, however, were too local, and would require too much explanation to be repeated. Some of them were of a personal nature, and verged on the confidential. When we passed by the Albergo dei

Poveri, the Neapolitan workhouse, he pointed it out, then chuckled to himself with seeming great enjoyment. At length, unable to keep in, he turned round on his seat, and, looking at us knowingly, he gave us the following information: —

“When I was fourteen, I was a young rascal. My father had me locked up there. I was put in a cell, behind one of those grated windows. I was kept for three months on bread and water.”

He turned back to his horse, shook his grizzled head, and chuckled again with evident delight. It can scarcely have been at the remembrance of this dainty fare; from which, I charitably concluded, it must have been at the recollection of the wickedness that had won him the distinction of a cell in the Albergo.

He went on talking, and the carriage went on ascending, bringing us, with every turning of the road, nearer to Vesuvius. For the last few months, Vesuvius has been in a state of eruption; a new crater has opened, lava has flowed down, no great injury has been done as yet, and perhaps none will

be done, but an eruption is always a capricious thing. It may coil itself round the ashy cone of the volcano like a fiery young serpent, or it may roll down a burning flood, devouring whatever it finds on its way.

Our coachman, however, was in a state of good-humour, even with old father Vesuvius. He told us very coolly that the eruption was still pending, and he took some pains to point out, with his whip, the deep, dark ridges the lava had recently made in the flanks of the mountain.

"See how it comes!" he added, with a sort of complacency. "Ah! it did a world of mischief the last time. Do you know how often Torre del Greco has been taken by Vesuvius, signore? Nine times!"

I use his own words; the word "taken" is literal. I thought it picturesque and characteristic.

He spoke of the volcano, which now rose, smoking against the lowering sky, a blue and sullen mountain, where verdure itself was dark, and melted away in the general gloom, just as he

might speak of a grim old captain, or rebel general, in whose prowess he took secret delight.

We were approaching the Campo Santo, and he showed us the place where the victims of the first cholera were buried.

"I was a lad then," he said, "and careless; but many a journey I have had up here."

"Were you afraid?" I asked.

He turned round, and said, with great simplicity: —

"Afraid! No, signora. When the Lord wants a flower, he gathers it."

The poor old fellow did not look much of a blossom, but for this he did not care. Rough, weather-beaten, and worn, he was an immortal soul, and he knew his worth.

I thought his answer charming — could he have answered better? — but, alas! fancy a London cabman calling himself "a flower!" We keep our poetry for books, and, under penalty of being laughed at, we must not venture to talk as, in moments of emotion, all — high or low, ignorant or educated — may feel. *En revanche*, the cold,

sensible nations that would scorn a figure of speech, do a hundred foolish things that draw on them the ridicule of their poetic neighbours.

Scarcely had our coachman called himself "a flower," when he burst into a low, chuckling laugh, that made him shake again on his seat; and willing to make us share in his amusement, he silently pointed with his whip to two carriages that had come up behind us, and that now preceded ours on their way to the Campo Santo. They certainly cut a very foolish appearance.

They were both full-sized, open carriages, drawn by strong horses — each could have accommodated a family with ease. In one sat a solitary gentleman; a solitary lady sat in the other. The gentleman reclined back, with his feet up on the opposite cushion. He was red-faced, red-whiskered, — he wore a wide-awake, and looked a sulky John Bull. The lady had a round travelling-hat, that did not conceal her face. Her eyes were red, and she wore an injured look. I knew them at once. A few days before, I had seen that grey wide-awake and that brown straw hat lovingly

bent over the same guide-book in one of the galleries of the Studij, and now — fickleness of the human heart! — they were going to the Campo Santo in separate carriages. They were not young enough to be lovers — they were evidently man and wife.

Of course, they had quarrelled on leaving Naples. Of course, the gentleman had handed the lady into a carriage, and, to show his dignity and cut her to the heart, he had majestically stepped into another. The cause and merits of the quarrel it was impossible to determine, but of this we may be sure, the lady would never have been so foolish as to take two carriages where one would do — it was a most man-like, unfeminine proceeding.

The absurdity of the act chiefly struck our coachman. He said little, indeed, but there was an exulting twinkle in his eye over the folly of the foreigner, which made work so light to Neapolitan horses, and sent so many carlini, that might have been spared, into Neapolitan pockets.

The cemetery lay before us — a green bower, with white buildings gleaming through every tree.

We entered it, and alighted in a square court, surrounded by tombs. They were all modern, since the Campo Santo is quite recent, but already defaced. A poor lady, whose effigy rose above her sepulchre, had lost part of her nose, and was not destined to last many years more.

No sooner were we out of the carriage than a guide came up to us. He was tall and lean, and had a strange, quaint look. He was shabbily dressed, but not like a man of the people. There was an air of half-education, half-gentility about him, which his address confirmed. He offered us his services in bad but fluent French. We requested him to speak Italian, as we should probably understand him better.

"Understand!" he said, musingly. "Ay, comprehend — make out — fathom — that is it!"

Having thus satisfactorily ascertained the synonymous terms of the verb "understand," an amusement which he renewed every time we spoke, ringing the strangest changes on all our words, he led the way.

"Are there any celebrated persons buried here?" I asked.

He turned round, and stared amazed.

"Are there!" he echoed. "Why, all the king's doctors are buried here."

He was so surprised at the question, that he forgot to analyse it.

He showed us at once the unfinished church, and all the curiosities of the place. Tombs are thick in the Campo Santo, trees and flowers are luxuriant, and it is difficult, on leaving it, to carry away a clear idea of this place. Graves in their little gardens, narrow paths — for the business of life is not here, and room is not wanted — the shade of trees, the beauty of flowers, the banks on which the purple mesembryanthemum grew in all its luxuriance, terraces whence the eye overlooked the bay, or rested on the gloomy slopes of Vesuvius, made it a beautiful place, indeed; but, the splendid views excepted, left no separate, distinct images on the mind.

One tomb was like another, one path was the image of another path. Even the tombs of the

royal doctors, which we were duly shown, had no particular individuality. There were several of them. The patient has outlived his leeches. If this were an Eastern country, one might charitably suppose that the bow-string was sent round every time His Highness had the headache; but this being out of the question, there remained but one conclusion possible — Death, owing these poor gentlemen a grudge, had watched his opportunity, and got it at last.

The Campo Santo, however, cannot be confounded with the Père la Chaise or Kensal Green. It has several very distinctive Italian features. Besides family tombs like those you meet with in the French cemeteries, that is to say, little houses, adorned within with stained-glass windows and altars covered with flowers, and which are erected above the vault in which the members of the family are successively lowered, the Campo Santo has larger buildings, square, circular, or pyramidal, erected at the expense of the different brotherhoods, for the benefit of the brethren, and devoted to their exclusive use.

A little shady enclosure, scattered with black wooden crosses, belongs to the sisters of Saint Vincent of Paul. Here the women who have left home, kindred, country, who have broken every tie that makes life sweet and dear, for the sake of the poor of Christ, sleep in graves as obscure as their obscure, though beneficent, life. The only distinction they have beyond the poorest Neapolitan, is that their sisterhood, which was united in the good works of life, is gathered in the same fold by death. Some of their orphan pupils sleep with them; the little square seemed almost full.

In another part of the Campo Santo there is a large square court, where the multitude, who cannot purchase a separate place of rest, are laid together. This court is flagged; every flag is numbered; and every day, in times of necessity, or every two or three days, when the mortality is not so high, one of the flags is raised; the iron grating on which it rests is removed, and the dead are lowered down; then grating and flag are replaced, and not touched for a year.

“Ah! if the dead could see, what a place to be

buried in," I had thought, as we stood on a sort of terrace, to which all foreigners are taken, so marvellously beautiful is the view that lies below and around that quiet city of the dead, but now, though there was nothing repulsive in this place, save the consciousness of what lay below, these thoughts seemed mere mockery. It was sickening to know that, even in death, the poor must be outcasts. To the rich, flowers, trees, and a separate grave, with its epitaph, are allotted; but the poor man can moulder away in no distinct bed; strangers, enemies, may sleep in one grave, what matter? there is no need of flowers for them. Their gravestone is the flag on which we were standing; their epitaph is No. XVII. Is it uncharitable to ask whether, if the rich kept the keys of heaven, they would let in the poor? And yet what is this to the dead-cart of Florence. Every night it goes round; as it passes and its bell is heard, doors open and silently houses yield up their dead. Uncoffined, unknown, the poor are borne away to a burial-place outside the city, and laid there.

We saw few people in the Campo Santo; by no

means the same number of mourners whom one meets with in French cemeteries. Yet the Neapolitans, like all Catholics, are faithful in visiting churchyards on the day of the dead, the second of November. They even add to that visit, a work of supererogation. They go and eat hearty meals in the taverns and ostelrie around the Campo Santo. "For the good of the dead," they say. It is impossible not to recognize in this the silicernium of the ancients.

I believe this custom to be peculiar to Naples. The burial-places of Italy differ widely from each other. They are all very interesting, and show us, under its various aspects, the civilization of several ancient nations, of the middle ages, and of modern times.

Of the ancient places of sepulture, the tombs of Etruria are the most interesting, for they are all that remains to us of a great people. Their literature, their records, their history, their religion have passed away; their name is only a vague tradition amongst their descendants, or food for the speculation of the antiquary; but from the first rude

Etruscan grave, with its cromlech-like masses of unshaped stone, to the simple tumuli, the rock-hewn and earth-covered chambers, and lastly to the streets of tombs making the name of Necropolis, or City of the Dead, no fiction, we have abundant evidence of the long progressive existence which this now lost people enjoyed long before the Roman name was heard of.

The only excavated tomb of the kind, I saw in Poestum — for there is great confusion, even amongst the learned, concerning what is really Greek or really Etruscan — had yielded beautiful vases and costly armour, but was then a vacant and uninteresting pit. Those marvellous chambers of rock, of which I had seen reduced copies in the Vatican, those rows of silent tombs lying in forgotten valleys, hiding their treasure and their dead beneath earth and trees, and in which, when first opened, the fortunate discoverer saw some warrior lying in state on his bed of stone, then trembling away into dust, whilst his armour remained hanging on the wall, and “a wreath of lilies of pure gold” still lay on the red limestone table, — these virgin

tombs, which the spoliations of many ages have rendered rare, even in Italy, have seemed to me more wonderful than the Pyramids of Egypt, ever since I saw the representations and the contents of one in the Gregorian gallery. This tomb, found beneath a mound, in a field, is supposed to have been coeval with the siege of Troy; at least its remote antiquity is not doubted; its architecture shows it to have been built before the correct principle of the arch was known. It consisted of two spacious chambers; in one stood a bier, formed of cross-bars of bronze, with a raised place for the head; a warrior is supposed to have been laid on this bier, for costly arms were found in this chamber; in the next, besides a quantity of bronze and silver vases, was found a heap of gold ornaments, which had fallen from the decaying body; these ornaments, which are now in the Gregorian collection, are of the most costly kind; they consist of brooches, bracelets, rings, chains, a head-dress, a breast-plate, a neck-lace, all in the Egyptian style, of beautiful workmanship, and especially of the purest gold.

From tombs like these the beautiful vases known as Etruscan, though the finest bear tokens of Greek art, are almost all derived. Between these costly sepulchres and the early Roman tombs, there seems to be a great gap. The oldest heathen burial-place I have seen in Italy has nothing in common with Etruscan chambers; it belongs to comparatively modern times, ancient though we thought it. It is a little cemetery near the great cascade of Tivoli. It has not been long known, and often escapes the attention of tourists. It is a small place, and stands in a high and solitary part of the mountain. Grass grows high around the grey stone tombs, which resemble so much our modern tombs, that the whole place, with its trees and wild-flowers, looks like the neglected country churchyard one now meets in every land, save this. At the time, I glanced at the inscriptions, some of which are very legible; but if they had any interest, it either escaped my limited knowledge then, or my memory since. I believe these ancient cemeteries are very rare. I have seen but this one in Italy.

The Romans lined their magnificent roads with equally magnificent sepulchres. Caius Cestius — of whom we know nothing, save what his epitaph tells us — that he belonged to the Popilia family, that he was a Tribune and a Pretor — had a handsome marble pyramid reared to him outside the gate leading to Ostia, where it still stands, close by the Protestant cemetery in which Keats is buried, and of which Shelley said that it was “making one in love with death, to think one should be buried in so sweet a place.” The round tower of Cecilia Metella on the Via Appia, was a fortress in the middle ages; the tomb of the Cotta family, by the same road, is a farm now, with an olive-garden on the top of the monument. Such of these tombs as have survived the ravages of time, are almost all inhabited; ivy clusters on their walls, and the smoke of some poor man’s hearth curls above their roof. Thus graves that have become houses, or sepulchres so dilapidated that even poverty forsakes them, for they can yield no shelter, still rise on either side of those roads leading to the eternal city. The Romans had placed them there, that the

living might ever preserve the memory and the glory of their ancestors; but posterity has not respected the illustrious dead.

The chamber in the pyramid of Caius Cestius is vacant; the ashes of Cecilia Metella have been lost; though the costly alabaster urn in which they were placed is still kept in the Vatican. Even the bones of the Scipios have not been allowed to sleep in peace. The family sepulchre of this line of heroes is found near the Porta San Sebastiano. It was discovered in a vineyard, about eighty years ago, and is still surrounded by gardens. When we visited it a few years back, the carriage drew up before a plain wooden gate, with the words, "The Sepulchre of the Scipios," written above it. We alighted and rang; the door opened; a peasant girl in a round straw hat met us silently. We saw a rude flight of steps, and a dark vault-entrance, above which grew a little wild garden, with white stocks and other spring flowers.

The girl put wax tapers in our hands, took a brass lamp, of the classical three-beaked shape, and showed us in. We entered a cellar-like vault —

not, indeed, like what is called a cellar in London, but like a continental cellar — deep, cool, spacious, fit for pipes of wine — such as that which Keats dreamed of when he called out for

“A draught of vintage that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth!”

— such a place, but ruder and more decayed, was the family vault of the Scipios.

The early Romans did not burn their dead, they simply laid them in the earth; but the lust of conquest entered their hearts, and the passion of revenge awoke in the hearts of the conquered. They profaned and sullied the graves of their masters, and outraged them, not merely in what man has always held dear and sacred, but in what the heathen faith held most dear and most sacred. The shade of the unburied corpse could not cross the Styx, but, for ever repulsed by Charon, wandered, disconsolate and lamenting, through the melancholy Hades. Alarmed, in their piety, at a form of revenge which they could not always prevent, the Romans burned their dead. We know, from ashes found in urns in the Etruscan tombs, that

the Etruscans had also adopted that habit, though not in every case. They were rigorous, however, in placing the dead below the earth — a custom which the Romans did not always observe — their columbariums, for instance, were in direct opposition to it.

Some distinguished Roman families did not adopt the funeral pyre, but continued to bury their dead according to the ancient fashion. The Scipios long preserved that habit. Sylla, who belonged to the Cornelian family, of which the Scipios were a branch, ordered his body to be burned; and the example of the dictator was afterwards universally followed.

Thus, neither urns nor ashes were found here — only simple tombs, in which the dead were laid, and left to the decay of nature. These tombs have been removed to the Vatican with their inscriptions. Copies of them are kept here, and give the old look of the place, but not the reality. They were rude, or, at least, very simple monuments, with scarcely any ornament, and carried one back

to the austere and primitive Romans. They were opened at the time of the discovery; a few bones and a little dust were found within, and, strangely enough, carried off to Padua, where a gentleman buried them in the garden of his villa. Even the inscriptions were dispersed. The most remarkable are in the Vatican; some are in the library of the Barberini, and some in England.

All the Romans were not wealthy enough to possess family vaults or magnificent tombs. Columbariums were popular amongst the middle classes. One of the finest and best-preserved columbariums I have seen is that of Livia, wife of Augustus, who had it for her freed men and freed women. It is in the Via Appia, where it was discovered, in excellent preservation, some years ago. It is a large chamber, filled with niches; in the niches are the urns, which still hold the ashes of the dead. The place is very like a dove-cot, whence its name of "columbarium." The columbariums were generally the property of one family; but ancient inscriptions teach us that favoured servants were admitted to the distinction of a niche, or that strangers and

even slaves were allowed to purchase the right of one from the owners.

The puticuli were for the large number of plebeians and slaves, who were not rich enough even for a niche in a columbarium. The poor were either burned together in a vast pyre, or buried in the puticuli outside the Esquiline gate. The corpses of men and the dead bodies of animals were thrown promiscuously into these pits, and left there.

Christianity brought back the old mode of burial, which had always been in use amongst the Jews; and persecution compelled the primitive Christians to bury their martyrs and their dead secretly in the catacombs. It is impossible to exaggerate the interest with which Christians of the nineteenth century visit these narrow vaults and chapels, which still bear eloquent witness to the heroism and the faith of their ancestors.

There are some very remarkable features even in the plan of the catacombs. They form a sort of subterranean city, which answered, in many respects, to the city above. Magnificent roads leading to

Rome crossed the Campagna between two rows of the tombs belonging to the powerful, the great, the rich; and below those roads there are long, narrow galleries, on either side of which the martyrs of truth or the poor of Christ repose in peace, IN PACE, they tell us, waiting for the great judgment day; for there came a time when the mistress of the world was divided by two nations, one of her real children, cruel, voluptuous, and sanguinary, the other of obscure foreigners, patient and much enduring, yet whose weakness proved mightier than strength, and sent the cross to realms where the vaunted eagle never flew. But the combat was long and trying, until the day of victory came. Long did hidden graves and secret worship bear witness to the fierceness of the persecution, and even when that persecution had ceased, the place which had seen so much sorrow and beheld so many triumphs was too dear to be forsaken. Christians continued to be buried in catacombs long after the Cæsars had acknowledged the faith. Thus the subterranean city existed for several ages, and it has been computed that, if its streets were put

one after the other, they would make a road three hundred leagues long, lined with six millions of tombs.

There is a gallery in the Vatican lined with inscriptions from the catacombs. I never saw but one person looking at them. Christianity has no charms for Christians. Yet these irregular, rudely carved letters, which tell of haste and scanty means; those ill-spelt words, which remind us that the poor, the ignorant, the suffering little ones of this world, were the first fervent Christians; the pathetic domestic epitaphs, so different from the cold inscriptions of the heathens; the Christian symbols and Christian's hopes of life, God, and immortality everywhere engraved or expressed, ought to be something more to us than heathen relics; one need not, one cannot ask them to be as much; since they are not infinitely more, it is better that they should be infinitely less, and entirely forgotten. Thousands of these inscriptions are found in the learned books published on this subject; but, unless when the fac-simile reproduces the original rudeness of the carving and spelling, they lose much. The

dove and olive-bough, the good shepherd, the fish, symbol of Christ, were the favourite subjects of the early carvers, and the favourite inscription, which is still used in many churches of Rome, was, with the name of the deceased, and the date of the birth and death, the monogram of our Lord, X , and the two touching words, *IN PACE*. In Peace, what more could Christians say, hope, or wish for.

The chief inscriptions, the most characteristic monuments, the bodies of saints and martyrs, have been removed from the catacombs, but though vacant of many of their riches, they are still a wonderful world to the explorer. It would take a lifetime to know them well; we went down to one of them but once, but their aspect was too impressive to be soon or easily forgotten.

Not far from the tomb of Cecilia Metella, beyond the gate of Saint Sebastian, rises the church consecrated to the heroic martyr. Near this church is the entrance to the catacombs of Saint Calixtus. We went down steep and dark staircases cut in the rock, until we reached the subterranean city. The deep, vague places, whence light is carefully ex-

cluded, met us at once. The feeble glimmer of our little wax tapers was just enough to light us on through the low narrow vaults. Once that light, faint as it was, fell on a slanting broken slab, on which I read in large, clear cut letters, the words CORNELII MARTYRIS. E. P. The place of Cornelius Martyr! with two letters to add that he was a bishop — what an epitaph, what a history!

Contradictory as it may seem, there is something very distinct through all the vagueness of the catacombs. You might wander in their inextricable labyrinth, and perish there like the travellers of whom such dreary legends are still told, but you cannot forget those long, low avenues, lined on either side with six or seven rows of gaping recesses; dark couches, where sorrowing, yet triumphant brethren once laid the bodies of saints and martyrs.

The days of persecution have gone by, and the church has placed beneath a thousand altars the relics of her heroes; but it requires no stretch, no effort of imagination to see her here once more in the days of her tribulation. Close with stones

those vacant beds, put the lighted lamps in those niches in the walls, still blackened with smoke, and instead of the guide who precedes you, who has spent his life here, and who can walk blindfold through all these intricate windings, place a Fossor with his lantern and pickaxe — if you like let it be Diogenes, whose grave will be found here — add two or three figures stealing along the dimly lighted walls and vanishing at the next turning; the picture is complete, and differs little from that before you.

The loculi we saw were almost all open; some, because the slab that closed them had been removed; others, because it had fallen to the earth, where it lay in broken fragments; but human dust, and sometimes bones, still remained within. My mother put her hand in one, and took out the tooth of a young child; we looked at it, and reverently put it back. Near this grave, a broken glass vase, still stained with dark matter, indicated, by one of the most certain signs, the presence of a martyr. The palm, token of victory, is one of the signs of martyrdom; the vase, in which the faithful placed

the blood of sufferers, which they affixed to their graves, and in which, after so many centuries, the traces of blood are still found, is another sign, and a more certain one. Here, therefore, lay one of the countless multitude who died for Christ.

I saw no slab, no inscription, to tell us the child martyr's history. Unconscious of his fate, he may have perished on his murdered mother's breast, and like the Holy Innocents, of whom Prudentius sang in his beautiful old hymn, he, too, may have played at the foot of the palm and crown of his victory.

The streets of the catacombs, for they are real streets, wide occasionally into a cubiculum or crypt, where the Christians met to hear that doctrine which they kept so secret, and to celebrate those mysteries which they concealed so jealously from the knowledge and the scoffings of heathens.

A hundred persons could not have met in these ancient chapels; but they are numerous and very interesting. Tombs line them on either side; an

altar rises at the end, and paintings adorn the walls. The subjects of these paintings which we saw were all allegorical, or belonged to the Old Testament, with two exceptions. One, of a pure style of art, resembled, in its correct and simple outlines, the frescoes of Pompeii; its remote antiquity was not doubted. It represented the adoration of the shepherds. They came humble and eager to meet the divine child, and found him in the arms of his mother; the grace and antique simplicity of the Virgin's attitude were very remarkable. The other painting was the portrait of a young girl, who, from the very unusual distinction of being represented in a place held so sacred, is believed to have been a martyr; but it is not certain. Her name was written below; I have forgotten it, but not her face, which was angelic. She had the dark Italian eyes, the pure oval and fine Italian features, but with them a sweetness and a purity which are ever rare and individual. It was a face more mortal than ever the Beato Angelico gave to his saints, but as tender and as holy.

Tradition and history both tell us how dear the

early Christians held the catacombs. Long after the persecutions had ceased, they still wished to lay their bones with the martyrs of God; but at length other customs prevailed; the martyrs were removed to magnificent churches, and the dead gathered around them, and forsook the catacombs. But the churches could not hold them all; the churchyard and the Campo Santo had their turn. Two of these burial-places, the cemetery of Venice and the famous Campo Santo of Pisa, are remarkable; one by its singular position, the other by its beauty.

Everything is strange in Venice, and a Venetian funeral is one of the strangest things that can be seen in it. Our gondola was entering a quiet canaletto, when we saw a door open; a coffin covered with red velvet, and borne by men in red, was brought out and lowered into a boat that lay waiting; priests entered another boat, and the two little skiffs rowed away and vanished beneath a bridge. I saw no sign of mourners. They were going to the cemetery; we went there a few days later; Venice lay behind us, we entered the calm, open

sea, and saw a horizon of snowy sunlit hills; a little more and we reached the cemetery, we found it in a quiet islet, walled in and guarded by a convent of monks. I never saw a more dreary, neglected place; high grass, luxuriant weeds covered the earth; green lizards basked on the walls, or ran about the graves; a bare-footed monk walked slowly in the sun. It was a place to meditate over Solomon's "vanity of vanities." We entered the cloisters; the tombs were less neglected, or rather showed neglect less, for the forgetfulness of the survivors was the same in both cases, but the glare of the sun on the stone walls, the solitude, the silence, seemed more painful and oppressive than even the neglect of the grass-grown graves in the cemetery. The church itself, though large, looked a forsaken church. We saw no one in it, no kneeling figures to speak of life and its troubles; we only caught a glimpse of a young monk in a gallery, and who vanished on seeing us enter.

A few weeks later, we were in the Campo Santo of Pisa. The Duomo, the Baptistery, the famous tower, and the Campo Santo are all in one spot of

this city, which was once great and strong, and now stands melancholy and forsaken by the Arno. It was a dull, rainy day; there was no one in the Campo Santo but the custode who admitted us. We saw an oblong, grass-grown square, with a few trees. Round it ran a light and graceful gallery, with frescoed walls on one side, and on the other — that next the court — light, gothic arches. The frescoes were religious — very ancient, often defaced, but grand, dreary, and grotesque.

The custode showed us round, explaining; then, yielding to our request, he let us wander at our will, and entered a sort of chamber or chapel, where he began reading aloud to himself. The place, though beautiful, is melancholy; and it may be that, living here alone, he needed the sound of his own voice.

No one is now buried in the Campo Santo, unless to confer some extraordinary distinction. Pisa has another cemetery; and that earth, which the men of the middle ages brought from the Holy Land, and which was said to have the property of

consuming, in three days, the bodies laid in it, receives the dead no more.

This place is used as a sort of museum for antiquities, Pagan or not; and when turning from the glimpse the arches gave us of that calm, green field, with its two or three melancholy yews and a cloudy sky above, I saw the head of a Venus, or an ancient fragment, I felt them as strangely out of place as the grim frescoes, and even the solitary keeper's monotonous voice seemed in keeping with the sad and deserted Campo Santo.

The faith of those who travelled so far, and toiled so painfully, to lay their dead in earth doubly sacred, seemed outraged. If the old Pisans could rise from that one, vast, grass-grown tomb in which they chose to sleep, they would surely groan to see that holy field become a profane museum. In giving it to the dead, they gave it to God; not to man, to life, and its uses.

I have said a great deal — too much, perhaps — about Italian burial-places; but the striking differences which exist between them, have led me farther than I intended, or thought possible. This

is the charm and the peril of Italy — see one thing, and everything of the Italy — see one thing, and everything of the same kind comes straight before you.

The Campo Santo of Naples took me, at once, to every burial-place I had seen in Italy; and, as if to show us how tenacious, spite all the vicissitudes they have undergone, and the various usages they display, this people are of old customs, we saw, in this modern Campo Santo, an unfinished family tomb, where the dead will be laid in horizontal recesses, like the dead of the catacombs eighteen centuries ago.

SIXTH CHAPTER.

Naples.

THE public buildings of Naples are numerous, and worthy of being carefully visited; but what Alexandre Dumas very justly said of Italy, that the splendour of its first aspect is destroyed by the south of France, which you must cross to go to it — and that, until we can skip from Paris to Naples, we shall receive but gradual and imperfect impressions — is true of Naples as a city. If we could leave London at night, and wake in Naples in the morning, we should find much to admire, apart from the unique position of the city and the grandeur of the bay.

But, after crossing all Italy — after seeing the magnificent churches of Venice and Rome, and the mansions of every city — admiration gets tired. The eye grows accustomed to marble pavements and gorgeous altars, it ceases to see the stateliness of palaces, and it is often only when one has re-

turned to the meanness of brick-houses, and the lamentable monotony of straight streets, with area railings, that one feels that Naples was really a fine and lively city.

But so superior are here the attractions of nature over those of art, so much more agreeable is it to wander in the Villa Reale than to see what there is to see in the city itself, that we delayed our visits to the churches of Naples until the missing of the train, that was to take us to Pompeii, gave us a spare morning. An afternoon, which we have added later, satisfied us. Our stay is to be short, and we preferred other pleasures.

The Strada di Toledo crosses Naples in a north-westerly direction. It is a fine street, lined with churches, palaces, and shops; it is narrow, as Italian streets wisely are, to give shade from the burning sun, and, to sum up its eulogies, it may be said to be the only handsome street in Naples. It closes, at one end, with the Palazzo dei Studij; and, at the other, towards the sea, with a wide piazza, on which rise the royal palace and the Church of

St. Francis of Paul, built on the model of the Roman Pantheon, a cold and magnificent building, which has the faults of most imitations. It recalls what it means to imitate, but has not the same power to move or interest.

Beyond the royal palace and the piazza, and facing the sea and Vesuvius, comes the quarter of Santa Lucia, the most Neapolitan part of all Naples. It is built on one side only. Palaces, hotels, and miserable, dingy houses jostle each other, and have the same magnificent sea view. The richest and the poorest dwell here side by side — dirt and luxury are both thriving. The shops are small, but much loved by foreign ladies. Here they purchase the magnificent coral, which goes all over the world, and is one of the branches of Neapolitan commerce.

Here, too, they may procure all sorts of wares, manufactured especially for foreigners — lava cups, terra-cotta figures, copies of Etruscan vases, cameos — the very stalls on the side near the sea are covered with maritime curiosities. The lounging

nondescript population which lingers about, sleeping in the sun or eating on the door-steps, lives in a state of perpetual conspiracy against foreigners.

On arriving here, we went to take apartments in a furnished house of Santa Lucia, to which we had been recommended; but it was fortunate for us that the house was full. No sooner was a carriage with trunks seen stopping at the door of a private house, than a flock of light, agile figures came racing towards it from the further end of Santa Lucia. They arrived out of breath, but eager to seize on everything resembling luggage.

When they heard the reply of the porter, "There is not a room left!" they laughed derisively at their own disappointment, and went back to their place in the sun.

After Santa Lucia, and still facing the sea comes the Chiaja, which is clean, stately, well-built, and has a decorous, courtly look. Between it and the bay lie the beautiful gardens of the Villa Reale. The Chiaja has but a

few shops, and is more a promenade than a street.

If the rest of Naples corresponded to the Chiaja and the Toledo, the city would be magnificent indeed; but the streets are narrow, dirty, tortuous, and steep — more lanes than streets. The shops are mean, dark, and low; the finest edifices lose by the vicinity in which they are placed; and the port, quays, and public places are only redeemed from the reproach of dirt and shameful squalor by the picturesque, moving aspect they always wear; and also, it must be told, by the happy abundance to which they bear undeniable testimony.

The first time we entered Naples was on a July night. We came from Rome, but by land. Accordingly, we drove along the quays. It was a festa, and I never had seen such a sight. Everywhere churches were illuminated, and looked more like Chinese pagodas than like churches; festoons of lamps crossed the streets; petards were firing off, with a deafening noise, at every corner. A little pig, tied in a doorway — too young to be accus-

tomed to Neapolitan ways — was sorely frightened, and screamed with all his might. He was the first of his species whom I had seen in a city, and therefore struck me.

A crowd of men, women, and especially children, that seemed endless, swarmed in the streets, on the quays, and around the stalls. These stalls were an epitome of Italian manners. They were so many kitchens. Fires were burning, and pans were whizzing everywhere around us. The night, which was dark, heightened the effect. The whole scene looked like the feeding of a nation. Hunger seemed out of the question here; and seen by daylight, the dirty bye-streets of Naples, even without the rejoicing of a festa, convey the same feeling. The abundance and cheapness of meat, vegetables, and fruit put starvation out of the question. Every street is a market, and every market is a picture of plenty. The town is dirty, the shipping in the port is unworthy of the magnificence of the bay; but a people can live here, and that is a very redeeming fact.

The picturesque variety which this out-door

cooking and eating, and out-door life in general, throw on the aspect of the city, is very gay and attractive. Every street here becomes a picture, and every picture offers a variety of characters. Eager faces of men, reckoning on their fingers, gather round the money-changer at his stall, with that tempting round cage, with coppers by way of birds. Ladies buy bouquets from the beautiful pyramids of flowers at the street corners. The little old woman, who carries iced water about, goes into a shop, and pours out a glass to a young shoemaker, who drains it rapturously. The ragged, shoeless boy is more dainty; he stands and sips his halfpenny ice in the middle of the street. The vender of oranges and lemons decks his gaily-painted little house, or draws his car, full of yellow fruit, and adorned with golden branches of the sweet, yellow broom. The woman who roasts the pigne — the fruit of the pine-tree, which tastes something like almonds — gravely sits, and fans her fire into life. Bellows are unknown here, save in forges — a reed fan is invariably used.

I do not speak of the dishes of maccaroni, and of the wonderful way in which they are swallowed; of pans where the fish fry, and seem to enjoy themselves, because there are not found in the Toledo or in the way of the beau monde. But one of the most curious pictures of all, though not the most innocent, is that which you unfortunately find everywhere, and chiefly, I believe, in the Toledo — the lottery-ticket office.

Italian genius shines here in all its glory. The shop has generally no door; it stands hospitably open, as wide as it can; its front is decorated with strips of paper, on which numbers are written; these strips of paper are curiously cut out, generally in the shape of an orderly's flag, and fantastically decorated with knots and coloured, and even gilt, paper, and especially with the most enticing devices. Let anyone imagine what it is to read in large capitals the numbers 7, 30, 81, with the mysterious intimation, "Take me," or the tender advice, "Give me to your friend." This, however, is reckoning too much on the generosity of human nature, for if this fascinating ticket is to win the

prize, can it be expected that persons in their senses will go and give up a fortune for the sake of friendship? Such things are common in novels, where reckless authors throw thousands and millions about like dust, but everyone knows that they are rare in prudent real life.

Gambling is the great Italian vice; it is a blind instinct with the people, a passion, and, like all passions, it has its superstitions. I have several times been asked to give numbers, but as I did not fail, whilst complying with the request, to wish aloud that the demander might not win, the charm was broken, and loss was the result. I once asked one of these persons on what system he played: —

“Vi dico io,” he replied, in his Italian phraseology. “I will tell you. When anything happens, I get a ticket. The Archbishop died, for instance. Well, I took the day of the month, the number of the year, and his age.”

I believe this to be the general system. There is still plenty of old superstition here, but it is not talked about. I have seen charms against the evil

eye worn by men with their watch-guards, and put by mothers round the necks of their children, but questioning was evaded; perhaps it was thought unlucky.

The corricolo is another glory of Naples. The number of small and cheap carriages is as amazing as the dexterity of the coachmen. They go in every direction with their rapid and light little vehicles, and accidents seem as much out of the question as they are a matter of course elsewhere. The people are as fond of riding as the rich, and the corricolo is their carriage. I know nothing more fantastic than to meet a corricolo on one of the roads leading to Naples; a lean, vicious-looking little horse flies past you, drawing something on high wheels, and on which a dozen, at least, of Neapolitans, men and women, sit and stand, according as they find room. Away they go, dancing along the road, singing, shouting, laughing, talking, and if you look sharp, you will see something dark in a net swung below the car; that something is a man, a woman, or a couple of boys, who could not find room above, and prefer the net to nothing.

Sixteen persons can find room in a corricolo; I was told so, but never counted beyond fourteen; even that seems a good load for a bad horse, that yet does not appear to care about it. This was explained to me; the construction of the corricolo is such that the weight he carries does not bear on the horse.

Pleasure of all kinds comes easily to the Neapolitans, if we may judge by the quantity of cheap theatres and public shows in the popular parts of the city. Punch is here in his native city, and as popular as ever. The giant, the dwarf, the rope-dancer, the dreadful drama, the farce, thrive in their sheds as well as the classical opera in the magnificent theatre of San Carlo.

Naples is a city of good living and pleasure, but it is also a city of devotion. Religious ceremonies and processions abound. The last three days of Lent were very impressive. Apart the Funzione in the churches, we had the silent streets, where not a carriage was to be seen. The king himself must go on foot and abjure his state for once.

Some of the Neapolitan churches are very fine. We began our visits with Santa Maria del Carmine, memorable as the burial-place of the young and unhappy Conradin, who was beheaded on the market-place, which faces the church, in 1268.

"Oh! mother, sorrowful are the news that will be borne of me to thee!" he exclaimed, as he ascended the scaffold; but mindful of the chivalrous customs of the age, and urged, perhaps, by the very presence of Charles of Anjou, who had come to witness the death of his victim, the young king threw his glove in the crowd as a gage of defiance, before he surrendered himself to the executioner.

His mother, who had come with a large ransom to purchase back her son, arrived when all was over. History, which has recorded the catastrophe of his death, is silent on her grief. We only know that the treasures, which were to have bought back the last son of the illustrious house of Suabia, were devoted by the childless widow to the erection of a church on the market-place, where he had been put to death.

Within its precincts, the remains of Conradin and his young cousin Frederic, who had suffered with him, were obscurely deposited. A stone behind the altar was long the only memorial of their resting-place. Within the last few years, however, a prince of the house of Bavaria — the present king, if I am not mistaken — was allowed to raise a monument to his unhappy countrymen. Mindful of the dead after a lapse of six hundred years, and wishing to perpetuate the memory of one of the world's most sorrowful histories, he caused a statue of Conradin, designed by an illustrious son of the north, Thorwaldsen, to be placed in the church, erected by the piety of the Empress Margaret. This church, though neither beautiful nor remarkable otherwise, is one of the most historical in Naples.

Four centuries after the death of Conradin, an insurrection broke out in the market-place. An unjust tax on fruit, and the daring of a young fisherman named Masaniello, caused a revolution. The history of Masaniello reads like a romance. For a month he was master of Naples, he dispensed

justice in the market-place, and gave life or death, according to his pleasure. Then suddenly, wearied of him or of licence, the people forsook their leader; four shots, fired by partisans of the viceroy, whom he had compelled to take refuge in the Castel Nuovo, ended his brief career.

Salvator Rosa was a witness of this revolution; he painted some of its most striking scenes, and his pictures, and other paintings on the same subject by contemporary artists, are amongst the most curious in the Studij. They are of the horrible kind, as a matter of course, and require good nerves to be looked at. The church del Carmine was the scene of several incidents in the brief history of Masaniello, and in the convent adjoining it he was miserably murdered.

The cathedral consecrated to Saint Januarius, the patron Saint of Naples, is the finest and most interesting church in Naples. The Gothic and the Greek styles meet here as they often do in a country which Paganism has not yet forsaken; but the general effect is fine and impressive. The cathedral was built on the ruins, and with the

remains of the two heathen temples of Neptune and Apollo. A hundred and ten columns of Egyptian and African granite still adorn and support it. The cathedral was first consecrated to Saint Restituta, but was rebuilt by Charles of Anjou; the Basilica of Saint Restituta, as it is called, though it is more a chapel than a church, still exists, and is entered from the present cathedral. Its foundation is attributed to the munificent Helena, the mother of Constantine, and it is acknowledged to be extremely ancient. Its paintings and mosaics are the delight of archæologists. They look solemn, antique, and venerable.

The cathedral of Saint Januarius, apart from its magnificent chapels and altars, abounds in memorials of the past. Charles of Anjou, the murderer of Conradin, has a monument above the entrance; near the door of the sacristy is the stone that records the fate of Andrew, King of Hungary, and husband of Queen Joanna. Laconically it tells us that he was put to death by the perfidy and the rope of his wife. Alluding, I suppose, to the legend of the silken string, which the fair traitress

twisted, with her own hands, to have her husband strangled with. The marble chapel, consecrated to Saint Gennajo, and which faces San Restituta, is comparatively modern; fine pictures adorn it; its treasures baffle description. Gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, and precious stones are carefully guarded in the sacristy for those festive days which bring all Naples to the shrine of the patron saint.

The church of Saint Dominick Major is purely Gothic; it is simple and austere, but far more impressive than many of the gorgeous churches around it. Some fine and ancient pictures adorn it; in the sacristy, which is splendid, are the twelve tombs of the Princes of Aragon, who formerly governed this country. These tombs are raised, and covered with velvet. The cloisters, which we did not visit, contain interesting memorials of the Great Saint Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor, who taught theology here. His name, once the glory and the strength of the middle ages, is now familiar to few, save the theologian and the man of learning. The fair vessel of fame has sought other shores. The time was when there could be no

glory but the religious. When to battle with the infidel, to redeem the tomb of Christ, was the honour of the monarch and the pride of the conqueror. When to raise mighty temples to God, to write books of theology, to paint scripture histories, or the martyrdom of virgins and saints, were all which genius and intellect required under their various aspects; when, in short, the thought and worship of God were everything to the ambition of man.

Our wars are commercial wars now; we are the allies of infidels; and small bands of pilgrims, who once travelled in multitudes, alone visit the grave of the Redeemer. The majesty of the old cathedrals impresses us, but we build such no more; our artistic feelings are charmed by the skill of the painter's hand; the soul, the passion of religion, with which his pencil spoke, move us slightly. Dust accumulates on the heavy tomes of the theologian; we do not open them, even for the sake of the dignity of thought, of the grace, the beauty they contain; but one of the many laborious productions of the middle ages has survived,

popular to this day; but one, and it is the simplest, the easiest, the Imitation of Christ, and learning still quarrels about who wrote it; Thomas à Kempis, the Fleming, or John Gerson, the Frenchman.

A fictitious taste, indeed, was raised some years ago for the Gothic, but it was a fashion — it never was a feeling — and it died, as all fashions die, miserably. It never reached to anything like the knowledge of heathen antiquity which enters into modern education. Every one knows something of the classics, with which no one now has anything in common. Who knows anything of the literature of the middle ages, which is the germ of all we are, and can be? As to mediæval architecture, there is little merit in knowing something of it — it is there, and must be looked at, whether people like or not.

The other churches of Naples contain records as interesting of men as eminent as Saint Thomas Aquinas, though less famous than the mighty doctor. But even the professional guide touches lightly on them. En revanche, every one is led to admire the gorgeous altars, every one must visit

the pictures in the various "sagrestie," and some of these paintings are undoubtedly very fine; above all, every one must see the Church of Saint Severus, famous for its statues of Modesty, wrapped in her marble veil; of our Saviour, in a transparent marble shroud; and of Vice Undeceived, in a marble net — tricks of art which every one has not the power of admiring.

Besides her churches, Naples has the palaces of her nobles and her public buildings. Two of these I have regretted not to visit — the Chinese College, established in 1732, by the celebrated Jesuit missionary, Father Ripa. We met the pupils once; and these Chinese faces and limbs, in the clerical costume of seminaristi, looked strange indeed. The other place I wish we had seen is the Albergo dei Poveri. It is not merely a house of correction for naughty boys, like our friend the coachman — it is a large and magnificent establishment, founded by the excellent Charles III., who, with the assistance of another admirable sovereign, Pope Benedict XIV., from whom he obtained the revenues of fourteen suppressed convents, built this

house, where the poor are not kept in painful idleness, but taught professions and trades, from surgery to the making of pins. Yet, it must be confessed, they do not like it; beggars are as rife as if there were no place of refuge for them. They are a teasing, eloquent, tormenting set. I know nothing more pathetic than their solemn adjuration: —

“For the sake of your dead!” with the touching addition, “Signora, for your poor dead!”

Plenty more might be said about Naples; but I can only speak of what I saw and felt interested in. There is also, I have no doubt, a great deal to say about the Neapolitans and their manners; but our first stay here was short, and our present sojourn is destined to be brief. I can only get glimpses of things, and speak from them, without attempting to decide on anything in particular, and especially on great questions.

Politics here are quite romantic, and rather mythical. People tell you gravely foolish stories, or emit opinions of the merits of which it is impossible to speak. News are scarce, and always

doubtful. Where the English newspaper correspondents get the marvellous intelligence to which they treat the public, is more than I can tell. They speak with a positiveness which excludes doubt — they certainly must have secret means of obtaining political news. As a rule, politics are not spoken of here; it is not safe.

I have read and heard a great deal in the praise and dispraise of the Neapolitans. The Sorrentini hate them cordially. There is a great difference between the two races, even physically. The men in Sorrento are not handsome like their women, but they do not look mean. The Neapolitan women are the plainest in Italy, and the men, though better-looking, have a sort of meanness in their retreating chins which is, at first, very painful. There is plenty of cleverness, however, in their mobile faces. Their ready wit is proverbial. Several of their witticisms have been repeated to me, but, to be understood, they require a profound knowledge of the Neapolitan dialect, which is essentially concise. I confess all their beauty was lost upon me. I did my best to admire, but could

not. Like all witty people, they are satirical. "Sea-robbers" is the name they give the English, and "tallow-eaters" is the classical appellation for the Austrians, who are as cordially detested here as in the rest of Italy.

The intensity of this hatred is something fearful. I remember a good and pious lady in Milan, who did her best to conquer this feeling. She went so far as to declare that the Austrians, taken individually, were better than the Milanese — it was only the government which was wrong. Yet this lady had a sickly little boy of three — a poor puny child — who, being out in her arms one day, shook his fist at an Austrian soldier, and told him, in Milanese, to wait until he grew up, and that he would cut him, and who, at home, sat dreaming aloud like a young Caligula, of how he would buy a mountain, plant a cannon on it, and shoot all the Austrians below. His good and gentle mother had never taught him this; but hatred grows fast and early, as it stays long, in a conquered people's heart.

The Neapolitans are not so tragic about it —

they have not suffered so much; but the Swiss soldiers, whom the King keeps, nourish them in the hatred of the Tedesco, and that hatred often takes the form of insult.

Two Austrian officers were walking in the Toledo, when, suddenly, a vendor of candles — everything is sold in the street here — planted himself before them, and, with his readiest smile, showed them his wares, and uttered the usual word: —

“Commanda, will you buy?”

His meaning was, “You are tallow-eaters; here is tallow for you!”

There was a laugh at their expense, for the joke to Neapolitans was exquisite; but the gentlemen, who probably felt innocent of ever having breakfasted on a candle, treated the insult with calm contempt, and walked on.

The wit of the lower class of Neapolitans is shown in a more agreeable way, and in one which foreigners understand better, by their talent for improvisation, which is celebrated. I should have liked to come upon one of those groups of storytellers and listeners, which are to be found on the

quays, but we never did. I regret it. I should not have understood the dialect, but the pantomime would have helped me.

The Neapolitans are great talkers; but it is precisely because they like to say a great deal, that they say it in few words, and often use certain conventional signs.

When we came here a year ago, we went into a straw bonnet-maker's shop in the Toledo, to buy a round garden-hat. I explained my object to a stout, dark girl. She did not answer, but made a peculiar noise with her tongue against the roof of her mouth. I thought she had not understood me, and spoke more clearly; the same noise and a distressed look were her only reply. I spoke a third time, and suggested that, perhaps, she had not got round hats. The noise was again repeated. I understood, at length, that she was saying "No!" all the time.

There is another negative, much prettier than this — the little back-handed motion of the forefinger, which Dickens has introduced in "Little

Dorrit;" but it is more common in Rome than in Naples.

If I make these remarks, it is simply to state that the Neapolitans, noisy and talkative as they are, talk a great deal in a peculiar pantomime, which seems to be as old as the hills, for, strange to say, this popular mimic speech has enabled learned men to understand the meaning of many scenes painted on the famous Etruscan vases.

Indeed, the lower classes of the Neapolitans bear in their aspect very strong traces of their origin. They have the slim, supple figures, the peculiar faces and shaped heads of their ancestors, such, at least, as they are portrayed on their wonderful pottery. It is true that the signs of the Etruscan blood are visible all over Italy. I often saw, in Rome, a pale, bronzed girl, who wore her hair combed back like an ancient statue, and who might have stepped down from an Etruscan vase, so thoroughly Etruscan was her whole aspect.

Where the race is still so strong, it is no wonder that old customs should be tenaciously preserved. Like the Sorrentini, the Neapolitans have

clung with great fidelity to one of the most remarkable features of the old costume, the red Phrygian cap; which flourishes here in pristine purity of shape, and in every variety of tint, after more than two thousand years.

Here, as in Sorrento, the small shops, the lava-paved streets, the brightly-painted houses, recall the shops, the streets, and the frescoes of Pompeii. The same shaped baskets are used for the ricotta, a sort of cheese very popular in Italy, which were used in the time of the Romans, and long before them. A marble egg is still laid in the hen's nest, to teach her, by its hardness, not to peck real eggs. The same way of tilling the earth prevails, and the popular, modern dialects are often pure Latin — they are certainly more like Latin than correct Italian is.

I asked Carmela once, in what language she said the Litanies?

"In Italian," she replied.

"You say them in Latin," I said.

She looked thoroughly perplexed at the intelligence.

What is true of Sorrentino is also true of the Neapolitan speech, and in both there is a tincture of Greek.

The Neapolitans do not bear a good name in Italy. I have heard them accused of treachery, of cruelty, of cowardice, of dishonesty, and of immorality. The Romans despise them, and the Sorrentini detest them. I cannot believe, from the little I have seen of their cheerfulness, good-humour, and kindness, that they deserve so bad a character. They use the knife, like the Romans, but with less dignity.

A Frenchman once threatened a Roman: —

“I will get the stick at you,” he said.

“And I the knife,” was the prompt and defiant reply.

A Roman would certainly never bear with the usage to which a Neapolitan submits without shame. The cane is not a mere threat here; it is used freely, and submitted to, not without thoughts of revenge probably, but with servile submission.

But a people who have been oppressed and degraded for ages — who have passed from hand to

hand like cattle — cannot afford to be proud, and learn to endure much which, to freer and haughtier races, seems incomprehensible.

The men of the lower classes are certainly tiresome and impudent in their pertinacity. It is next to impossible to get rid of them, if they once fasten on you. The very good-humour with which they bear repulse and reproach is most irritating.

The vice, the cruelty, of which they are accused, we have not seen. We have even gained no practical knowledge of the dishonesty for which they are so famous. It is true, we were so warned against the thieves of Naples, that we have been unusually careful.

A Sorrento gentleman, who is half a Neapolitan, told us wonderful stories of the dexterity of Neapolitan pickpockets. We told him stories as wonderful of the London pickpockets. He seemed half-piqued, and maintained the supremacy of his countrymen. His last story showed not much cleverness, indeed, but a wonderful degree of impudence.

The father of this gentleman was walking with

one of the good-sized Italian umbrellas in his hand, when he felt it gently and gradually slipping away. He looked round, and saw a lad in the act of drawing it towards him. He was so confounded at the audacity of the attempt, that he allowed the lad, who dropped the umbrella, however, to escape unmolested.

"But some one must have seen what the thief was doing," I observed. "How was it your father got no warning?"

"People do not like to be stabbed," he replied. "A thief was stealing a lady's dog some time ago; a boy saw it, and told her. The thief turned round, and stabbed him to the heart."

"And the police?" I said.

Upon which the gentleman, who was a man of honour and veracity, assured me positively that the police were in a league with the thieves, and more pernicious than useful. He went so far as to say that, by bribing the police, you could recover your lost property, as their friends, the thieves, were always willing to oblige them.

This amiable association, however, has its limits.

Thus the police will not allow a thief to carry fire-arms, which are forbidden to all classes. A thief, so ill-advised as to break through this agreement, is a lost thief. Thus, though the streets of Naples are dangerous at night, persons, who choose to brave the law and carry pistols, are safe from all save sudden surprise, which is so easy in the lanes and alleys of this intricate city. The Neapolitan thief fears neither the stick nor the knife, but fire-arms, which he has never handled and rarely seen, inspire him with mortal dread.

I might add some wonderful stories on this subject, but I am inclined to consider them half-apocryphal. However, and to show how little security there is here for life and property, I will mention what happened to a friend of the gentleman who gave me these details.

This friend, a priest, was walking on the piazza which faces the royal palace, towards seven in the evening, whilst there was still light, when a poor woman came up to him, and asked him to have the kindness to read for her a letter she had just received from her husband at sea. He complied

with her request; but scarcely had he begun to read, when two men sprang from an alley, knocked him down, robbed him of his watch and purse, and gave him a parting stab, which luckily did not kill him, but kept him some weeks in bed.

These instances are not rare. A few days ago, between eight and nine, a poor Englishman was robbed and stabbed at the Villa Reale, the public promenade, and one of the most frequented places of the city. In short, Naples is now as unsafe as most large cities were a hundred years ago, and as some parts of every city are still.

I have heard that some of these thieves are very pious, and I do not think it unlikely. I have already said so in speaking of Sorrento; the middle ages are strong in Italy; and the middle ages, that had such great crimes, that have left us such fearful pages in their history, had great virtues, and none greater than faith. The marvel is not that the ill-doers of this country should do wrong, and yet believe in a religion that forbids wrong doing, since there is no Christian that does not incur the same guilt in his way; the wonder is rather that,

though steeped in crime, these men and women should preserve their faith. The truth is, they cannot help it. It is, and must be, a torment to them, yet they must keep it. They cannot deaden remorse and laugh it to scorn, and, as an educated Roman once said to a French priest, who was shocked at an anomaly which does not exist in France, "there is this difference between your criminals and ours; — yours can live comfortably with remorse; ours cannot, for they believe sooner or later they must repent."

I believe this to be an undoubted fact; of the value of that repentance God alone is judge.

However defiled may be the hearts in which it is often lodged, Neapolitan faith is certainly deep and sincere. Previously to going to Naples, a traveller was taking leave of the late Pope Gregory XVI.

"Since you are going to Naples," said His Holiness, "bring me back a little Neapolitan faith."

Everyone has heard of the Neapolitan lazzarone, but let no one look for him in Naples; he has long ceased to exist, and his descendant does not like

the name. The said descendant, moreover, is infinitely cleaner, better behaved, infinitely more honest and decorous than his progenitor was. What must that progenitor have been?

There is still, however, about the quays, a loose population of fishermen, hangers-on, men-of-all-work, who occupy the old place of the lazzaroni, and fulfil some of their duties. They are divided into regular bodies, who are in the pay of various parties. The liberal party have their men, and the king has his. These secret regiments live in a state of polite jealousy; they are careful not to intrench on their respective quarters, and keep the peace pretty well; but two bodies, both in the pay of the king, had a dreadful fight about the time of the revolution. The men of Castello dell' Uovo declared that the men of Santa Lucia had no business to fight for the king; a regular battle was the consequence. They fought as they always fight, with stones, and as they are excellent marksmen, and never miss their aim blood was shed and lives were lost, before peace could be restored. These men have no particular costume to know them by; the red cap and knitted

woollen jacket for winter; the same cap and a linen shirt and trowsers, for summer, are common to all the poorer Neapolitans.

The middle and upper classes are much less easily known and understood than the lower. This is true in every country, and especially here, where the people lay themselves open to every eye, with the most good-humoured naïveté. There is a great distinction too between their feelings; the poor man is joyous and happy; he does not understand politics, does not care for them, and will never die for them; the man of the middle class sees farther and deeper; he groans over the bad state of trade and the miseries he has to endure from the police; he generally detests the government, and longs for a change, for the present, he declares, is unbearable. There is more education, more spirit, more dignity, in the middle class than in the poor; there is also less kindness and good-humour; but the remarks I made with regard to education in Sorrento apply to Naples, in many respects at least. There is great and profound knowledge and profound ignorance, not indeed of reading and writing, but of every-

thing that is not modern and Neapolitan. A Neapolitan gentleman was visiting Pompeii; the guide came to a house, which has been called the house of the Emperor of Russia, in compliment to the sovereign, in whose presence it was discovered a few years ago.

"What!" exclaimed the Neapolitan, innocently amazed at the strange fact, "was there really an Emperor of Russia in the time of the Romans?"

His knowledge was just sufficient to startle him, but it went no farther. These sort of blunders are common; they spring from the want of reading, and this may be safely attributed to the low state of literature. There are, indeed, book-stalls and book-shops all over the town, but there is little variety in their contents; books of devotion, very badly printed, and the Italian classics, are their chief staple. There is a striking difference between the information of persons who only know Italian, and those who know other languages, for the study of which they all have wonderful facility. The very boys and boatmen in the port pick up more French and English from the sailors, than the English cap-

tains between England and Boulogne gather of French in the course of years.

I need scarcely say that literature has no rewards here. If a writer were to ask a girl in marriage, the parents, before they granted his request, would be careful to inquire into his circumstances. That he could live by writing would be out of the question, so I was told by a Neapolitan gentleman, who heard amazed the large sums which French and English authors get for their works.

"Per Bacco," he exclaimed. "Can that be! Are you sure of it?"

I assured him there could be no doubt about it, but I am not certain that he believed me, after all. He had contributed to some of the Neapolitan publications, and was an amateur author in his way; but he got tired of never being paid, and he left it off. I should have liked to get more information from him on other subjects, but he was political, and saw everything through politics; he was, moreover, too ignorant of foreign manners to understand in what they differed from the manners around him. If I spoke of social life, he was sure to shoot off at

a tangent about liberty; there was nothing to be got from him, and our acquaintance here is too limited for personal observation; but a learned Neapolitan, who seems to be as much at strife with the social world of his country as the former is with the political, and who inquired curiously into foreign ways and manners, unsolicited gave me the following remarks. I found them a very fair pendant to Donna Annunziata's views of marriage.

Count —, spite his title and his learning, had as much naïveté as the Sorrento girl; but it is an Italian quality, and though to inexperienced travellers it may seem foolish and silly, it resembles in nothing what we call thus.

Count — never lost his self-possession, or looked awkward; but spoke seriously, like a man whose mind was ill at ease.

"I shall never marry," he said, rather ruefully; "the married condition has its duties, and a man should not enter upon them unless he feels equal to them."

Count — is pious, like Donna Annunziata, and takes a religious view of every subject.

"My friends marry," he resumed, "but they are not happy. At first, oh! they are delighted; it is charming! But at the end of three months they look melancholy. They come to me and cry. 'What for,' I ask, 'what have you to say to your wife?' 'Nothing; indeed, she is good-tempered, she is a clever housekeeper, and she never asks to go out; but I am not happy!'" and the tears flow freely. "And that is why," resumed Count —, looking almost as melancholy as if he were married, "that is why, signore, I remain single. I really am afraid to change my state."

As, spite all his fears, it was evident that Count —, who is barely thirty, would have been delighted to be fairly and happily married — for, if he was so determined not to marry, what was he afraid of? We condoled with him, then tried to help him to discover the causes of this strange melancholy which besets bridegrooms in this merry country.

"Perhaps they had not chosen well — perhaps the wives they had taken, however excellent they might be, were not suited to their husbands?"

"And how is it possible to know what a woman is like?" rather desperately asked Count —, "when one cannot go twice to a house, where there are girls, without either the parents asking what you mean, or the world beginning to whisper."

"Then, perhaps," I suggested, "the low state of female education makes wives dull company at home."

"There it is — there it is!" he exclaimed; "but men will not look at the root of the evil. And yet, I assure you, Signore, our women are not naturally inferior. They are good-natured, amiable, and lively; but that liveliness goes away with youth or with the cares of marriage, and then they get heavy and dull. And that is why I stay at home with my books, and will not change my state."

I dare say Count — will change his state before long — he looked predestined to married life; but we have seen no more of him; and this brief conversation is all that has remained to me of an Italian's views of marriage. Putting them side by side with Donna Annunziata's, they make an uncomfortable picture of what the Church has called "Sacramentum Magnum."

Count — is a Liberal in politics, but moderate. He detests the abuses he sees, but he says: —

“Is it fair to throw the whole blame on the King?”

The corruption which prevails in every rank is, indeed, a growth of the soil, with which the King has nothing to do. He is one of the first to suffer from it. A lady, the daughter of a deceased colonel, was reduced to extreme poverty. She applied to the Queen for relief, and fainted from want in her presence. The Queen was greatly affected, and ordered one of the gentlemen of her household to give this poor girl a sum of one hundred ducats.

“How much do you suppose the lady got?” asked Count —, who told me this story. “*Ten.*”

It is true that the dishonesty of the gentleman was discovered, and that he was shamefully dismissed from the Court.

“But where is the use?” he added, with unconscious naïveté; “another will do as much.”

There is, unfortunately, no denying it — the

general rule, from the courtier to the gabelliere, is plunder.

Another reproach is affixed to the Neapolitans, en masse — that of cowardice. Bad soldiers they certainly are; but a people may not have the military spirit, and yet not be cowards. The Neapolitans have fought bravely, when they fought for what they liked. It is not every nation that likes fighting for its own sake. English coolness is not in their temper, and they cannot have French or Irish impulsiveness without a motive. In a country where the people have no political existence, no political passions, and, consequently, little patriotism, that motive is slow to come. There is, indeed, a hard, worldly saying, which declares that every nation has the government that is fit for it; but free and prosperous nations invented that saying, and they alone will believe in it.

However, as every one has heard plenty about the faculty Neapolitan soldiers have for running away, I will simply say this: — I have met two men who, of all I knew, impressed me most with a sense of courage and daring — one was an Irish-

man, the other a Neapolitan. Also, when the French took the Malakoff, the Zouave who entered it first and planted the tricolor flag upon it, was a Neapolitan.

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Baia.

A GERMAN gentleman, whom we have met at Naples, complained bitterly of the necessities of travelling.

"When I was in Rome," he said, the other day. "I was told, 'Ah, but you must see Naples — that is the real Italy!' I came to Naples; and now they tell me, 'Ah, but you must go to Sorrento!' — not to speak of Pompeii and Baia. In short, I can have no peace, no quietness, no calm enjoyment of a place; it is all racing, running, and seeing."

He seemed exasperated, so we did not argue the case with him; but allowing him to sulk over the bitter necessity of seeing the loveliest places in this world, we went off to Baia, quite contented with our miserable lot. Yet we knew that Baia, so marvellous to read of, is very sad to see; but no one must leave without seeing it.

These pilgrimages to places with mere names

are strange proofs of the power of the ancient world over the modern mind.

"I was here," it says; "come and look at the spot!"

And we obey the call, and go, docile as children.

But, indeed, excursions, pleasant everywhere, are always delightful in Italy. One day in Baïa was enough to convert our German grumbler if he had but been with us; but he was mousing in Naples over book-stalls, and snapping up costly editions with learned greed.

We left at six, in all the freshness of the morning; we drove past the cool and lonely Villa Reale, then up the Chiaja, then by the so-called tomb of Virgil. Virgil died while on his way to Greece, and was buried near the grotto of the Posilipo. His fame survived the language in which he had written, and Virgil in the Italian middle ages was not so much an epic poet as a mighty necromancer. The strangest stories were told and believed of his power in the black art. No sooner was an ancient columbarium discovered in an

orchard close by the entrance of the grotto, than it was pronounced to be the lost tomb of the poet; learning and superstition both cherished the belief. Petrarca planted a laurel-tree above the Roman's grave, and the spot, sacred as a shrine, became the bourne of many a devout poetic pilgrimage. A marble urn, containing the ashes of the poet, is said to have remained there until the year 1326, when it pleased his Majesty, King Robert, to have it taken to Castel Nuovo, where it was never found again. The whole tradition is doubtful. Virgil was certainly buried somewhere near this place; and the little columbarium, overgrown with green things, and commanding a splendid view of Naples, is picturesque and interesting, but for my part I had rather believe that Virgil never slept here, and that his quiet dust, undisturbed, if unhonoured, has mingled in peace with the earth of the beautiful place he loved so well.

Naples is enclosed on its western side by the verdant mountain called the Posilipo; a road winds round the sea, but it is a circuit; the ancients found it so, for they pierced the mountain, cut a

tunnel through it, and thus made a short way to their favourite Puteoli and to luxurious Baïa. The grotto as it is called, has been considerably enlarged by the moderns. Its length is about the third of an Italian mile, and its breadth sufficient to allow two carriages room for driving. It may have been a curious place before rail-roads were known, but since everyone has experienced the singular sensation of leaving daylight for the gloom of a tunnel, it is nothing to speak of. Indeed, so far as strangeness goes, the tunnel with its sombre walls, where the steam curls in dull white clouds, is far beyond the grotto, where you drive at a moderate rate, and meet carriages like your own, or quiet country people walking leisurely.

We had left Naples and its noise on one side of the grotto; on the other we found the green and quiet country. The road passed through vineyards, and never, it seemed to us, had we seen verdure like this. The sunlit grass, the tall vines waving above it, and casting a frail and delicate shadow below, the blueness of the sky were pleasure enough for a day. This is the charm of Italy;

everything is so exquisite here that a heap of stones may become the bourne of a journey, and not disappoint. The mere going and coming back are sufficient delight.

The road soon took us again by the sea-side. The view was enchanting. The waters of the Mediterranean washed the beach with the faint ripple of this tideless sea; blue and rosy mists softened the long, low promontories of Baïa and Misenum. It looked a shore to drive by for ever in the freshness of a May morning; not, indeed, of a cold, keen English May, but of an Italian May, sweet and delightful. It was getting hot, however, by the time we reached Pouzuol, a dirty-looking town enough, where we halted, and, without alighting, secured a guide. We were surrounded by a dozen or so, and the usual comedy followed. They all wore hats with numbers to them, and spoke of tariffs, which we took as a warning that we were going to be cheated. A preposterous sum was asked, but being firmly resisted, it came down to a moderate one. It was still an overcharge, but not so much so as to be worth losing time about it, so our new acqui-

sition, No. 10 by his hat, and an impudent, bold-looking fellow by his face, got on the box by the coachman, and at once entered on his office. Of Pouzuol he told us little, and yet what a story he might have told. This dirty little place once rivalled Delos in magnificence, and was likened to Rome by Cicero, who lived near it. Its port and forum were splendid, and its walls were so strong and so well defended that they resisted the repeated attacks of Hannibal. Here, attracted by the beauty of the climate, the fertility of the country, and by the mineral baths and springs with which the district still abounds, the Romans built those magnificent villas, of which the broken walls are scattered on every rise of ground.

Here Cicero wrote his *Questiones Academicæ*," and such men as Veditius, the descendant of freedmen, fed their murenæ with the flesh of disobedient slaves.* And here, on the 3rd of May, of the year 59, borne on a ship of Alexandria, whose sign was the Castors, a Jewish man, named Paul, landed a prisoner, under the keeping of the centurion

* The Villa of Veditius was on the Posilipo.

Julius. He came poor, oppressed in bonds, the bearer of marvellous tidings, the teacher of a philosophy more eloquent than the Roman's, and far more pure — the destroyer of the foul civilisation which the freedman Vedius fitly represented.

“From thence,” say the Acts of the Apostles, “compassing by the shore, we came to Rhigium (Reggio); and after one day, the south wind blowing, we came, the second day, to Puteoli, where, finding brethren, we were desired to tarry with them seven days.”

There were brethren then, even in this luxurious city — even in this second Rome. And of all the ancient glories of the place, this one alone — the landing of a captive on their shores — has survived, as more than a written record, amongst the descendants of the people of Puteoli. Every year a solemn procession is held on the quays of the decayed city, to celebrate the anniversary of that memorable day.

Every year, Christianity triumphs over her fallen foe, Heathendom; and, in the face of heaven and earth, proclaims her glorious victory. The spot

is well chosen, not merely as the very place where the great Apostle landed, but as commanding the ruins of Caligula's bridge, one of the most gigantic efforts of that Roman pride, which the cross humbled to the very earth.

The port of Puteoli was magnificent. It held ships innumerable; and an enormous mole, supported on twenty-five arches, stretched far out into the sea. This mole had been repaired by Hadrian and Antonine, but Caligula, wishing to eclipse the fame of Xerxes, whom he resembled in folly, and anxious, too, to strike terror into the hearts of the natives of Britain and Germany, resolved to prolong this pier until it should reach the opposite shore of Baïa.

Suetonius has left a minute account of this bridge, and of the ceremonies which attended its opening, both of which cost immense sums. To build the bridge would probably have been too tedious and too difficult. Boats were collected from all the ports of Italy, and placed, in a double row, across the sea. They were covered with earth and stones so as to imitate the Via Appia. Inns were

built on either side, with fountains of sweet water. So profuse, indeed, was the expense which attended this undertaking, and so costly were the two days' triumph which followed, that a famine, felt even in Rome, was the result.

When the bridge was completed, Caligula, clothed in the cuirass of Alexander, which he had taken from the tomb of the dead hero, and crowned with the civic wreath of oak-leaves, rode from one to the other shore like a warrior going to battle. Innumerable troops of foot and cavalry followed him, and shared in the glory of the exploit, which was commemorated the next day by a solemn and gorgeous triumph. Imaginary spoils of imaginary foes were borne before the conqueror. Darius followed in his train. When the middle of the bridge was reached, the Emperor ascended a platform, harangued his troops, and congratulating them on their successes, he caused money to be distributed amongst them. A splendid entertainment followed. It was carried on through the night, which was made bright as day with the glow of countless lamps.

Caligula, heated with wine, became merry, and, by way of amusement, threw his courtiers into the sea, and caused the boats, full of people and soldiers, to be upset. A great many were drowned, and more would have perished but for the stillness of the waters.

The bridge of boats, the Emperor, and his triumph, have passed away — the mighty pier itself is gone. We asked for it, and Number Ten carelessly pointed out some blackened stones raising their huge broken heads above the calm waters, which he called "Caligula's Bridge," but which our guide-book asserted to belong to the pier.

Number Ten was not inclined to argue the fact, or to lose time on the subject. Most guides are apt to exaggerate the importance of the scenes they lead you to, but ours proved a notable exception. According to him, the whole business of sight-seeing was an imposition, and, but for our friend, the printed and bound guide, we should have fared very indifferently.

But the guide-book is the Rhadamanthus of the Italian cicerone. I remember, that when we visited

Pœstum, the two keepers of the grand old temples exchanged significant looks.

"They have the book," they said ("Hanno il libro"), which meant, "We must be on our guard — the enemy is at hand."

The book having given me a pompous account of the villa of Cicero, I asked to be shown over it. Number Ten shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"The villa of Cicero! — there was no villa; or, at least, the wall up there was all that was left. If the signore wished to visit it, they might."

We had left the town; upon a height, we saw a brown ruin, almost mingling with the burnt soil of the mountain. It really did not look inviting. It might have been built on the model of the Athenian Academe, and Cicero might have written his "Questiones Academicæ" in that pleasant home. The great orator might even have spent many an idle hour with his angling-rod, for the sea, now far and low, then washed the limits of his dwelling; but what of that? Would not a salve from the

road do as well as a toilsome ascent up the bank to see stones crumbling into dust? Number Ten had his way, and we drove on. Pleased with our obedience, he gave us a piece of unsolicited information, for which I hold him responsible.

The low hills around us had a glory about which our book was silent. Here grew, here ripened the luscious vine which yielded the ever-famous Falernian wine. Médoc, Clos Vougeot, what are you to the Falernian wine? Poets have grown sober, or drink spirits, and poor, modern wines have no chance of going down to posterity.

We soon reached the regions of Lake Lucrin and Monte Nuovo. The lake, famous in ancient times for its excellent fish and delicious oysters, was formerly much larger than it is now. A substantial village, named Tripergole, stood between it and the sea. On the 29th of September, 1538, the earth opened. Part of the lake, and the whole of the village, with all its inhabitants, were engulfed. An eruption of flames, sand, and burning stones accompanied this frightful catastrophe.

A high mountain, three miles round, rose on the plain; the sea, which had retreated from the shore, rushed back furiously, and covered the spot on which the village once had stood. The lake is now a small, tame pool of water. Vineyards and a rough road cover the buried village, and Monte Nuovo is a sterile mountain, with a soft, rounded shape, that recalls the slopes of Vesuvius.

Lake Avernus, which was formerly connected with the sea, is now enclosed in land a little way from Lake Lucrin. We alighted, and entered a narrow path in a vineyard. Ere long, we reached the lake, and stood on the quintessence of classic ground, on the spot round which gather the legends, the traditions, historical and sacred, of antiquity.

Dreary is the account which historians and poets have left us of this gloomy place. Its very name, derived from the Greek, and meaning "wanting in birds," was the most melancholy which imagination can conceive. So poisoned was the air, that birds could not live here. The dead sea alone, with its desolate shores, approaches in dreariness the sad significance of such a name. Still water, and trees

casting huge shadows over it, but no joyful song of birds — no passing in the air above of swift wings — such was Avernus.

In the gloomy forests, which covered its surrounding hills, lived a barbarous people, skilled in the art of prophecy. Grottoes, which knew not the heat and light of the sun, were their homes. Here, accordingly, every popular and poetic legend placed the entrance to the ancient Tartarus. Here the sibyl breathed her oracles in her gloomy cavern, or wrote them on leaves of the forest, which she cast forth to the winds, reckless of their fate. Here Æneas came, and plucked the golden bough, and led by the melancholy priestess of Apollo — fit guide for such a journey — went down to the sad world of the dead. The Styx, Acheron, the Elysian fields, were to be found here. It was the holy land of antiquity, still marvellous after three thousand years, and to which, pilgrims of tradition, though not of faith, we had come like thousands before us.

Ah! what a contrast! We saw a quiet sheet of stagnant water, overlooked by low, tame hills,

wooded towards their base, and giving to the edge of shore a soft, green line reflected in the still mirror below. To our right rose the ruins of the temple of Apollo. To our left wound a path, leading to the grotto of the sibyl, shadowed by trees, and with grass and wild flowers growing profusely.

Before us, on the very edge of the lake, lay a boat, with two brown fishermen. They were drawing forth their nets, in which the bright live fish were leaping. The sky was clear and calm; the morning was pleasant and cheerful, the place looked a pretty place enough, lonely, and without a dwelling visible; but, alas, for the horror, for the gloomy majesty of haunted Avernus! One could imagine a peaceful pastoral, a gentle idyl unfolding itself by that quiet lake, beneath the shadow of those low trees. Here, the young and frolicsome Galatea might have thrown the apple to her Dametus, then run to hide behind the willows, willing to be seen, though seeking concealment. Here Amaryllis might have lamented the absence of Tityrus, but could a sibyl, a real sibyl, ever have lived here?

It was so, however, and taking the path by

the lake, we went towards her ancient home, preceded by Number Ten; I was gathering flowers, when it occurred to me to question him concerning a peril which Virgil has recorded in his eclogues, as well as the loves of Galatea and Amaryllis.

"Are there serpents here?" I asked.

"Plenty," he calmly replied.

And it was no fiction. An unfortunate German traveller lost his life here a few years ago in this fashion. A serpent stung him, and so venomous was the sting that the poor gentleman died. The occurrence is probably rare; but let ladies be careful of two things; firstly, not to go in the grass, however tempting flowers may be; secondly to abjure thin boots for the day.

It was not long before we reached the entrance of the grotto. The keeper opened the door, and before us yearned the dark pit, still answering in its external aspect to Virgil's description.

Dreary and dark looked that long gloomy avenue of stone, lit by the glaring torches of the keeper and our guide. Here you felt, indeed, the sibyl; the lake, the low hills, were suddenly invested with

a sort of decayed majesty, and the memory of a bygone terror. Sceptical learning, indeed, has disputed the authenticity of the grotto; it avers it to be lost, as well as the descent to hell, and the character of the whole place; but learning wants to know too much; and it is far more probable that this is the real grotto of the sibyl, than that it is not.

We went on into the deepening cavern, until we reached a narrow and low opening. Here the keeper of the grotto, tucking up his trowsers, made a very unexpected proposal; it was that if we wished to see the very spot where the sibyl gave forth her oracles, we should allow ourselves to be carried. Walk we could not, for the place was flooded with water. We hesitated, my mother refused, but I consented. The way seemed long and toilsome; but at length we reached the sanctuary; I was put down on a stone bench, and I could look around me. We were in a deep, dark cavern, barely lit by the flaring torch which the keeper held. He showed me the three stone baths in which the sibyl purified herself before she gave

forth her oracles; the raised stone which she ascended to deliver them; the small opening, through which the Roman cavalieri, as he called them, and who were not admitted into the innermost sanctuary, received her prophecies; and lastly, the ancient opening, now closed, and which communicated with other mysterious caverns, a hundred, according to the reckoning of Virgil, but long lost, and buried in the heart of the mountain.

I was very much struck with this home of ancient faith and prophecy, but I should have been more impressed if I had then met, as I have since, in a French book of travels, the account which Justin the martyr gave of this very place seventeen hundred years ago. "We saw," writes the eminent saint and philosopher, "when we were in that city, (Cumæ), a place where a sanctuary is hollowed in the rock; a thing really wonderful, and worthy of all admiration. Here the sibyl delivered her oracles, were we told by those who had received them from their ancestors, and who kept them even as their patrimony. Also in the middle of the sanctuary they showed us three receptacles cut in

the same rock, and in which, they being filled with water, she bathed, as they said, and when she resumed her garments, she retired to the inner part of the sanctuary, likewise cut in the same rock, and there, being seated on a high place in the centre, she prophesied." This account is literal to this day.

The place is still private property, and is transmitted from father to son, a patrimony. To this day, the men who admit the stranger show him the sanctuary of the sibyl, the three baths, the raised seat, and tell him, in the same words how the prophetess delivered her oracles. Time has wrought but two changes; the oracles are lost with the faith they upheld; the entrance by Cumæ exists no more.

All had been seen which there was to see. We bade farewell to the grotto and the shadow of the sibyl, to the lake and its traditionary horrors; we went back through the vineyard, re-entered the carriage, and drove away.

We were now in Baïa, and as we drove through the ruins, which cover the surface of the

soil, we had leisure to compare the past Baïa with that which we saw. The Romans loved these shores beyond all others. Horace sang that the whole world did not hold another spot like this, and Martial, proclaiming it rich in all the sweetest gifts of nature, echoed the strain. Here the masters of world, forsaking Rome, reared delightful villas, and spent their days in luxurious pleasures, which history has stigmatized and recorded. Cicero exerted his eloquence, and Seneca his philosophy, in lamenting the iniquities of the place. The emperors made it a scene of their vices and crimes. Here Marcellus was poisoned by Livia that Tiberius might fill the throne of Augustus, and Domitia by Nero, that he might enjoy the wealth of his aunt. Here, too, he attempted the life of his mother, Agrippina; but that stern empress, of whose vices we have all heard so much, and of whose virtues we are told so little, was saved by the devotedness of her freedwoman Acerronia. The empress was lying under a canopy on a galley in the bay, when it fell, and killed Gallus by her side. Seeing that she had not perished, a rower rushed forward to

dispatch Agrippina; by proclaiming herself the empress, Acerronia received the death-blow, and saved her mistress, who leaped into the sea and swam on shore. She took refuge in her villa, at Bauli, but murderers came in the night and struck her, murderers avowedly sent by her son. At Misenum, within view of Capri, which had so often cast on the shores of Baïa the corpses of his victims, Tiberius perished, after a long life of vice and crime, and here Hadrian died a few days after having compelled his beautiful and accomplished wife, Sabina, to put herself to death. If voluptuousness filled the air of this place, where no man of honour could spend a night or pass a day without loss of fair fame, so impure had it become, blood sullied those luxurious homes which rose on the brow of the hill, those fragrant bowers of myrtle and laurel-trees that environed them, those lakes, covered with rose-leaves, where bathers sported in the delightful freshness of evening, whilst barques, laden with music, passed amongst them.

Such are the accounts, at least, which the ancients have left us of their cherished Baïa, and

the name of the place has remained as a tradition of beauty, luxuriousness, and crime. The crime, the voluptuous pleasures, the very beauty now seem gone. The bay is still splendid, the sea is still serene and lovely, but the shores are desolate, the air is poisoned by pestilential vapours, the saddest images, which the Hebrew prophets applied to the guilty cities, are not too sad for this "city of vanity." Here, within view of that beautiful but forsaken sea, Isaiah might have sung the burden of Tyre. "Howl, ye ships of the sea, for the house is destroyed, whence they were wont to come." Here Jeremiah might have told of a land that was to "become a desolation and a reproach, and a desert and a curse, and all her cities shall be everlasting wastes."

Like this sad picture was the Baïa we now saw. The low hills that rose above the beach were vainly crowned with fresh spring verdure, the trees were poor and low, mere saplings; the ground, overrun with weeds, gave no token of culture; the few dwellings we could see looked miserable homes; the crumbling ruins of temples and palaces

scared away every cheerful thought. A lonely castle, built by the Spaniards for defence of the coast, rose above the sea, for ever guarding these silent shores.

The groves of majestic trees, the bowers of fragrant shrubs, the elegant dwellings which once gave the place its enchantment, had left the memory of their beauty and the ruins of their splendour to rob it of that charm which God has bestowed on virgin, unsullied solitudes. If generations of peasants had lived here for evermore, if the spot had not been profaned by man's folly and crime, the traveller would not seek it, it is true, but he would pass through it with no oppressive feeling of what has been, his goodwill would go to it as a blessing, and seeing the beauty of sea and sky, he would wonder why that quiet shore was so lonely; but who that knows its past history can wish this place to be peopled once more.

Until the memory of its iniquities be forgotten, it is but fit that it should remain the melancholy

desert it now is. Where man sinned, man ever suffers.

The ruins of Baïa are not all sufficiently well preserved to be interesting, for though the erudite traveller, who journeys with his trunkful of classics, may feel happy in hunting out the doubtful sites of lost edifices, the general tourist, whose knowledge is supplied from the vague stores of memory and previous reading, and fortified by guide and guide-book, cannot care much for such uncertain triumphs. Number Ten, though remarkably loquacious to our coachman, was to us shamefully silent; and if my friend the guide-book had not suggested to me to question him concerning the house of Julius Cæsar at the right time, we should have known nothing about the dwelling where the first Roman emperor lived, and where the beloved son of Octavia died.

"The Signore are passing through it," he coolly replied.

And so we were. The road cut through ruins — those that seemed to stand in the sea alone kept a substantial aspect, as much so, at least, as ruins can. Equally decayed were the remains of

the temples of Diana and Venus. We did not visit them, but were satisfied with the temple of Mercury, which is better preserved. We found it within a little piece of cultivated ground, and were admitted by a sallow, ragged, eager-looking family, who followed close upon us. The temple is circular, and lit by an opening in the roof like the Roman Pantheon. Green bushes and a patch of blue sky filled the irregular gap. Below it, in the centre of the place, where the rain fell and freshened the earth, grew a wild and tangled mass of verdure. The book called this a temple of Mercury, but Number Ten declared that we stood in ruined Thermæ, and pointed out the traces of the ancient baths. It may have been both Temple and Thermæ.

The Pantheon in Rome was originally the caldarium of the Thermæ of Agrippa. He afterwards consecrated to all the gods of Olympus the circular hall, which the Romans aptly call the Rotunda, and Mercury may likewise have taken possession of the caldarium of some Baïa bathing-place. This building is still remarkable for a curious echo,

which bears the lightest whisper round the walls, and which may have been found convenient, whether it was a bath or a temple — a question that matters very little to the nineteenth century.

We thought we had seen all, but the sallow family suddenly preferred a claim: —

“Would we not see the tarentella danced?”

Poor things! they did not look very tempting dancers. We declined; upon which they all raised a clamour: —

“Not see the tarentella danced! Why, no one dreamt of leaving without seeing the tarentella danced in the temple of Mercury.”

The Italians all deal in this sort of eloquence, resting on the power and charm of antique names. I remember that, when we were in Rome, four years ago, wandering about the Forum, a man teased me into purchasing a bit of marble.

“What should I do with it?” I asked, endeavouring to resist.

The son of Romulus threw himself into an attitude, and, extending his hand, replied, with dignity: —

“When the Signora goes back to her own land, she will show this piece of Ross Antico, and say, ‘It came from the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Stator, in the Roman Forum!’”

The rolling sound of the last words was irresistible, and the piece of marble was purchased.

Here, again, the same artful eloquence proved successful. We gave in; a tambourine was produced, and the tarentella began with two, then four, then five dancers. They danced admirably — their bare feet kept better time than many dainty feet in satin shoes — their gestures, though concise, were most expressive.

I have never been able to understand quadrilles, and I do not know if they have any meaning besides motion; but the tarentella is not to be mistaken. It looks like a heathen relic of the land, and half justifies the denunciations of the curato of Sorrento, who has caused many a sinful tambourine to be burnt. It is, indeed, as much of a pantomime as of a dance, and may be considered as a sort of history of rustic courtship. Man does his

best to please woman, who flirts in the most approved fashion — lures him on, laughs at him, and jilts him, or will do so some day.

The performance was soon over. We left the temple and the dancers, returned to the carriage, and made our next halt at the baths of Nero. Externally, these baths are nothing; but they have preserved their ancient curative virtues, and are frequented by sufferers from rheumatism. A lank, lean young fellow showed us into various rude rooms, that seemed dug in the mountains, and where hot and invisible springs produced different and increasing degrees of heat. Satisfied with the stifling vapour which met us in a gloomy passage, leading to a still hotter apartment, we were retiring, when, to our alarm, the lean young man took off his waistcoat, with the evident intention that his shirt should follow.

We asked hastily what he was about, but he only stripped the faster, until Number Ten laughingly interfered, and, using gentle force, compelled him to keep his garment and resume his waistcoat.

An explanation followed. It is the custom for the keeper of the place to rush into the inner room and come out in a state of profuse perspiration, for the benefit and information of inquiring travellers. To his great chagrin, we declined seeing the exhibition. In vain he assured us we missed the gem of the place. We remained firm, but comforted him by making a stand before his little store of treasures, with the avowed intention of purchasing; shells of no great beauty, fragments of mosaic, the quaint skeleton of a little, horse-headed-looking fish, of which the learned name has escaped me, and a Medusa's head, in basso-relievo, formed the staple of his collection.

He watched us with an eager eye, he praised the shells, he praised his little skeleton, he was in raptures with Medusa, and groaned with discontent when we left by this piece of antiquity, which had two trifling objections — it was abominably ugly as a work of art, but most conscientiously heavy as a piece of marble — and selected a fragment of mosaic. However, here, no more than in the bath exhibition, could he have his way. We left him

moderately satisfied, and waiting for some more curious traveller. Poor fellow! well he might be lean, leading such a life!

The road now went up-hill to Bacoli, the ancient Bauli, the residence of Agrippina, whose tomb is said to be found on the coast below; but the tradition is doubtful, as Tacitus positively says she was buried in an obscure tomb near the villa of Cæsar.

We did not visit it, no more than the ruins of the villa where Hortensius fed his beloved Murænæ. Driving through the village, we went on to the Piscina Mirabile, or reservoir for water, which the Romans built here for the use of their fleet stationed off Cape Misenum.

It is a magnificent relic of Roman greatness. Two stone staircases lead down into a vast hall, 216 feet long, 65 broad, and supported by forty-eight pillars of massive strength. It is a cool, gloomy place now, with a wild garden above it. Dangerous to unwary travellers are the thirteen openings in the roof, through which water was formerly drawn forth, but which now serve no ostensible purpose save that of convenient traps.

An ill-tempered woman is the keeper of the Piscina. She locked the wooden gate, and grumbled hard at not being more generously retributed for the mighty effort of opening it. This is the end of an undertaking which cost fabulous sums, a world of toil, and years of time, and to which a canal, fifty miles long, bore the waters of the Serino.

From the Piscina Mirabile we went a little farther on to the Cento Camerelle, a subterranean building, so called from the quantity of small rooms of which it consists. It is supposed to have been a prison; if so — God help us! — what a place to be shut up in!

A young woman, who admitted us, acted as cicerone. She would not allow Number Ten to say a word — the place was evidently her exclusive property. She lit a torch, and, showing us some sizable ruins, or rather arches, said they were for the guardia, the soldiers or keepers of this miserable place. She then led us along a narrow passage, which was crossed by another at right angles. She raised her torch, so that its light successively pierced for a few feet the gloom of these four dark

avenues. It was sickening to think that men had lived and died here, shut out from light, air, and life, seated side by side, and chained like wild beasts. Blessed to them was Death the liberator.

As we came back, the young children of our guide met us, armed with the tambourine. We were to be treated again to the tarentella, but, to their mortification, we declined. Poor little things! they did not seem to feel or know that this was really too sad a place to dance in.

"And now," said Number Ten, "I will show you Cape Misenum, the Elysian fields, the Dead Sea, and Acheron," words full of promise, but miserably empty in the performance.

We were taken to various high points of ground; from one we saw Cape Misenum stretching into the sea, but where was the Roman fleet which Pliny commanded? From another we saw a small lake, this was the Dead Sea; the tame fields beyond it were the famous Elysian fields; farther on Lake Fusaro, so called because hemp and flax are put to steep in it, turned out to be Acheron, the ancient Tartarus. The very Styx himself, by which the

gods dare not swear in vain, was a poor stream, flowing into the sea. Oh! to come so far and find so little, places and things which imagination had made so lofty and so great.

"And now," said Number Ten, "the ladies have seen all."

"You agreed to take us to Cumæ," I said. He looked amazed.

"Cumæ! why, it was miles away and there was nothing to be seen there. Nothing but a hole of a grotto, full of serpents."

We assured him that we thought there was very little to be seen in the whole excursion of Baïa, but that having begun, we liked to end, and that whether there was much to be seen or not, we would go.

He looked exasperated with the book, on which he threw the whole blame of our resolve; but as there was no remedy, he submitted.

We drove through very wild-looking and very bad roads for something better than a mile; then the carriage drew up before the open gate of a farm, hidden in threes; we alighted; a dog flew at

us from beneath a shed, and a man carelessly whistled him off. We crossed some cultivated ground, and came at length to what looked a quarry by the sea. No venerable antiquity guarded this ancient home of the most ancient of sybils. The stone looked newly cut, and was so I have no doubt; not a vestige of sculpture was visible; there was nothing, literally nothing, but a most splendid view; below us lay the blue sunlit sea, and before us rose, with its double peaks, the island of Ischia.

"You see what an imposition it is," triumphantly said Number Ten, "I hope you will tell all your friends not to come to Cumæ."

He was once more quite good-humoured, and, exulting at our mistake and his veracity, he accompanied us back to Pozzuoli. We saw very little on our way home, yet there was plenty to see. The Solfatara, an ancient volcano, the grotto of the dog, the lake of Agnano, are interesting as evidences of the volcanic nature of this burning soil; but the day was hot, we were tired, and we only paused at Pozzuoli to visit the magnificent ruins of the temple

of Serapis, far superior to anything we had seen. Mineral baths were formerly adjoining to it, and some of the ancient cells are still devoted to that purpose. The Archbishop of the town has caused these useful baths to be restored.

We now parted with Number Ten, who, touching the number in his hat, gave us a most impudent wink, and hoped we would recommend him to our friends. We had seen all, save the places I have already mentioned, and the amphitheatre of Pozzuoli, which we voluntarily abandoned as too high to go to. The ardour of the morning was over, and nothing was so tempting as to go back to Naples without delay.

EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Pompeii.

THERE is no spot more attractive in all Italy than Pompeii. I have heard Granada placed beyond the fairest scenes of what seemed to me an earthly paradise; the Roman ruins are said to be nothing to the Grecian temples, and become insignificant when compared to Thebes and Balbec; but I never heard of a second Pompeii, of another city of the dead, buried for seventeen hundred years, and rising before the living, unroofed and dismantled, but still a city with streets, houses, tombs, temples, and all the records of a vanished people and a bygone civilization.

There is no place, perhaps, that has been oftener described and written about. Volumes, the result of studious and patient lives, have been devoted to it; travellers have visited it, and talked about it on their return; the Pompeian court in the Crystal Palace has made thousands familiar

with the plan and economy of a Pompeian home, and fiction, mightier than learning and art, has told the story of its destruction, and deepened the gloom and horror of that mighty catastrophe.

It might seem that, after this, there is nothing to be said of Pompeii, but, as even after visiting twice this interesting place, I have read with pleasure and interest three different accounts of it, penned in different languages, by minds of wholly different stamp, I cannot help thinking that the readers, who have gone thus far with me, will not mind going on still further.

To know Pompeii one must begin with Vesuvius, and the history of Vesuvius is long and tragic indeed. That purple mountain, with its ashy cone and verdant slopes, which slowly pours its sedate volumes of smoke across the azure of the sky, or sends up, in the calmness of summer days, a faint curling breath of tremulous vapour, timid and quiet enough for a cottage chimney, is the pitiless tyrant of these beautiful and fertile shores. When it seems most peaceful, when you think it most quiet, a tongue of flame seen in the darkness

of the night, a sound as of thunder rolling in secret abysses, warn you that in a moment the fated time may come, that in a few hours all may be over.

The earliest eruption on record is that of the twenty third of August of the year 79 of our era. Three cities, Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabiæ, were buried in floods of lava, or covered by showers of stones and ashes, which raised a cloud, visible across the Mediterranean in Africa and Syria, and mighty enough to darken the day of Rome; thousands of the inhabitants perished, the aspect of a fertile country was changed to desolation and death, the very shores of the sea took other forms, and advanced or receded as the waves deserted their bed or invaded their land boundaries. There is no historical mention of any eruption preceding this, but a silent and significant fact remains; the streets of the buried cities are paved with lava. Other cities perhaps had been destroyed on the sites where they rose. Other generations had perished, but time had passed, tradition had grown silent, and man had forgotten the tale. He

had flagged his pavements with the lava of the old unremembered eruptions, and he had never thought that a burning flood would descend on his home, and, hardening into stone, bury him and his brethren in one vast grave.

The account given by Pliny the younger, of this catastrophe, in which his uncle, the celebrated naturalist, perished, is most interesting. It is contained in two of the letters which he addressed to Tacitus, and from which, for the benefit of such readers as may not have the original at hand, I shall extract freely, using the old-fashioned, but good translation, in which that agreeable author is most familiar to the English public. After a flow of stately and graceful speech, of compliment and truth, which the younger Pliny might write, and Cornelius Tacitus might receive; after impressive allusions to the catastrophe which involved "a most beautiful country in ruins, and destroyed so many populous cities," the nephew of the great naturalist thus relates the tragic death of his uncle.

"He was, at that time, with the fleet under his command, at Misenum. On the 23rd of August,

about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud, which appeared of a very unusual size and shape. He had just returned from taking the benefit of the sun, and, after bathing himself in cold water, and taking a slight repast, was retired to his study. He immediately arose, and went out upon an eminence, from whence he might more distinctly view this very uncommon appearance. It was not, at that distance, discernible from what mountain the cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to ascend from Mount Vesuvius.

“I cannot give you a more exact description of its figure than by resembling it to that of a pine-tree, for it shot up a great height, in the form of a trunk, which extended itself, at the top, into a sort of branches, occasioned, I imagine, either by a sudden gust of air that impelled it, the force of which decreased as it advanced upwards, or the cloud itself, being pressed back again by its own weight, expanded in this manner. It appeared sometimes bright, and sometimes dark and spotted, as it was either more or less impregnated with

earth and cinders. This extraordinary phenomenon excited my uncle's philosophical curiosity to take a nearer view of it. He ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and gave me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I rather chose to continue my studies, for, as it happened, he had given me an employment of that kind.

"As he was coming out of the house, he received a note from Rectina, the wife of Bassus, who was in the utmost alarm at the imminent danger which threatened her, for her villa being situated at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, there was no way to escape but by sea. She earnestly intreated him, therefore, to come to her assistance. He accordingly changed his first design, and what he began with a philosophical, he pursued with a heroical turn of mind. He ordered the galleys to put to sea, and went himself on board, with an intention of assisting not only Rectina, but several others; for the villas stand extremely thick upon that beautiful coast.

"When hastening to the place from whence others fled with the utmost terror, he steered his

direct course to the point of danger, and with so much calmness and presence of mind, as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the motion and figure of that dreadful scene. He was now so nigh the mountain that the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the nearer he approached, fell into the ships, together with pumice-stones and black pieces of burning rock. They were likewise in danger not only of being aground by the sudden retreat of the sea, but also from the vast fragments which rolled down from the mountain, and obstructed all the shore. Here he stopped to consider whether he should return back again, to which the pilot advising him: —

“‘Fortune,’ said he, ‘befriends the brave! Carry me to Pomponianus!’

“Pomponianus was then at Stabiæ (now Castellamare), separated by a gulf which the sea, after several insensible windings, forms upon that shore. He had already sent his baggage on board; for though he was not, at that time, in actual danger, yet being within the view of it, and, indeed, extremely near, if it should in the least increase, he

was determined to put to sea as soon as the wind should change. It was favourable, however, for carrying my uncle to Pomponianus, whom he found in the greatest consternation. He embraced him with tenderness, encouraging and exhorting him to keep up his spirits; and the more to dissipate his fears, he ordered, with an air of unconcern, the baths to be got ready, when, after having bathed, he sat down to supper with great cheerfulness, or, at least (what is equally heroic), with all the appearance of it.

“In the meanwhile, the eruption from Mount Vesuvius flamed out in several places, with much violence, which the darkness of the night contributed to render still more visible and dreadful. But my uncle, in order to soothe the apprehensions of his friend, assured him it was only the burning of the villages, which the country people had abandoned to the flames. After this he retired to rest, and it is most certain he was so little discomposed as to fall into a deep sleep, for, being pretty fat, and breathing hard, those who attended without actually heard him snore. The court which led to

his apartment being now almost filled with stones and ashes, if he had continued there any time longer, it would have been impossible for him to have made his way out. It was thought proper, therefore, to awaken him. He got up and went to Pomponianus and the rest of his company, who were not unconcerned enough to think of going to bed. They consulted together whether it would be most prudent to trust to the houses, which now shook from side to side with frequent and violent concussions, or fly to the open fields, where the calcined stones and cinders, though light indeed, yet fell in large showers, and threatened destruction. In this distress, they resolved for the fields as the less dangerous situation of the two — a resolution which, while the rest of the company were hurried into it by their fears, my uncle embraced upon cool and deliberate consideration.

“They went out then, having pillows tied upon their heads with napkins; and this was their whole defence against the storm of stones that fell round them. Though it was now day everywhere else with them it was darker than the most obscure

night, excepting only what light proceeded from the fire and flames. They thought proper to go down farther upon the shore, to observe if they might safely put out to sea, but they found the waves still run extremely high and boisterous. There my uncle, having drunk a draught or two of cold water, threw himself down upon a cloth which was spread for him, when immediately the flames, and a strong smell of sulphur, which was the forerunner of them, dispersed the rest of the company, and obliged him to arise. He raised himself up with the assistance of his servants, and instantly fell down dead, suffocated, as I conjecture, by some gross and noxious vapour, having always had weak lungs, and been frequently subjected to a difficulty of breathing. As soon as it was light again which was not till the third day after this melancholy accident, his body was found entire, and without any marks of violence upon it, exactly in the same posture that he fell and looking more like a man asleep than dead."

In this simple, yet graphic account, we see not merely the great naturalist meeting peril with the

calmness of a man of science and the dignity of the Roman, but also the confirmation of some interesting facts and signs with which many subsequent catastrophes have made the world familiar. To this day, the infallible token of an eruption is found in the cloud shaped like a pine-tree, which issues from Vesuvius. The description of the frightful scenes of this lamentable event, and which is found in the second letter to Tacitus, is equally impressive.

“My uncle having left us, I pursued the studies, which prevented my going with him, till it was time to bathe; after which I went to supper, and from thence to bed, where my sleep was greatly broken and disturbed. There had been, for many days before, some shocks of an earthquake, which the less surprised us, as they are extremely frequent in Campania; but they were so particularly violent that night, that they not only shook everything about us, but seemed, indeed, to threaten total destruction. My mother flew to my chamber, where she found me rising in order to awaken her. We went out into a small court

belonging to the house, which separated the sea from the buildings. As I was, at that time, but eighteen years of age, I know not whether I should call my behaviour in this dangerous juncture courage or rashness, but I took up Livy, and amused myself with turning over that author, and even making extracts from him, as if all about me had been in full security.

“While we were in this posture, a friend of my uncle’s, who was just come from Spain to pay him a visit, joined us, and observing me sitting by my mother with a book in my hand, greatly condemned her calmness, at the same time that he reproved me for my careless security; nevertheless, I still went on with my author. Though it was now morning, the light was exceedingly faint and languid; the buildings all round us tottered, and though we stood upon open ground, yet, as the place was narrow and confined, there was no remaining there without certain and great danger; we therefore resolved to quit the town. The people followed us in the utmost consternation, and (as to a mind distracted with terror every suggestion

seems more prudent than its own,) pressed in great crowds about us in our way out. Being got at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still in the midst of a most dangerous and dreadful scene. The chariots, which we had ordered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though in the open fields, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is at least certain the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea animals were left upon it. On the other side a black and dreadful cloud, bursting with an igneous serpentine vapour, darted a long train of fire, resembling flashes of lightning, but much larger. Upon this our Spanish friend, whom I mentioned above, addressing himself to mother and me, with greater warmth and earnestness: —

“‘If your brother and uncle,’ said he, ‘is safe, he certainly wishes you may be so, too; but if he perished, it was his desire, no doubt, that you might both survive him; why, therefore, do you delay

your escape for a moment?' We could never think of our own safety, we said, while we were uncertain of his.

"Hereupon our friend left us, and withdrew from the danger with the utmost precipitation. Soon afterwards the cloud seemed to descend and cover the whole ocean; as, indeed, it entirely hid the island of Capreae and the promontory of Misenum. My mother strongly conjured me to make my escape at any rate, which, as I was young, I might easily do; as for herself, she said, her age and corpulency rendered all attempts of that sort impossible; however, she should willingly meet death, if she could have the satisfaction of seeing that she was not the occasion of mine. But I absolutely refused to leave her, and, taking her by the hand, I led her on; she complied with great reluctance, and not without many reproaches to herself for retarding my flight. The ashes now began to fall upon us, though in no great quantity. I turned my head and observed behind us a thick smoke, which came rolling after us like a torrent. I proposed, while we had yet any light, to turn out of the high

road, lest we should be pressed to death in the dark by the crowd that followed us. We had scarce stepped out of the path, when a darkness overspread us, not like that of a cloudy night, or when there is no moon, but of a room when it is shut up and all the lights extinct. Nothing then was to be heard but the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the cries of men; some calling for their children, others for their parents, others for their husbands, and only distinguishing each other by their voices; one lamenting his own fate, another that of his family; some wishing to die from the very fear of dying, some lifting up their hands to the gods; but the greater part imagining that the last and eternal night was come, which was to destroy both the gods and the world together. Among these there were some who augmented the real terrors by imaginary ones, and made the frightened multitude falsely believe that Misenum was actually in flames. At length a glimmering light appeared, which we imagined to be rather the forerunner of an approaching burst of flames, (as in truth it was), than the return of day;

however, the fire fell at a distance from us; then, again, we were immersed in thick darkness, and a heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which we were obliged every now and then to shake off, otherwise we should have been crushed, and buried in the heap. I might boast, that during all this scene of horror, not a sigh or expression of fear escaped me, had not my support been founded in that miserable, though strong consolation, that all mankind were involved in the same calamity, and that I imagined I was perishing with the world itself.

“At last this dreadful darkness was dissipated by degrees, like a cloud of smoke; the real day returned; and even the sun appeared, though very faintly, and as when an eclipse is coming on. Every object that then presented itself to our eyes, (which were extremely weakened,) seemed changed, being covered with white ashes, as with a deep snow. We returned to Misenum, where we refreshed ourselves as well as we could, and passed an anxious night between hope and fear; though, indeed, with a much larger share of the latter; for the

earthquake still continued, while several enthusiastic people ran up and down, heightening their own and their friends' calamities by terrible predictions."

There is nothing to add to this dreadful picture, to this lamentable drama, true of every eruption that has occurred since the year 79.

Pliny has recorded the general calamity; but Pompeii was the greatest sufferer; for it perished utterly. At the time of its lamentable destruction, it was one of the largest and most populous cities in all Campania.

It rose at the foot of Vesuvius, by the river Sarno, near the sea, in a fertile plain. It was, by its position, the commercial centre of Herculaneum, Stabiæ and Nuceria. Oil and wine were its chief articles of trade. It was also a favourite residence with the Romans. Cicero loved his Pompeian home as much as his famous villa in Tusculum. The inhabitants, twenty-five thousand in all, were of mixed origin. Greeks, Etruscans, Egyptians even, and Romans met within its walls. About thirteen

hundred perished; the rest escaped, but a plain replaced the city; the sea retreated a mile from the shore; port, shipping, commerce, people, and prosperity vanished for ever.

This dreadful eruption has had numerous successors during the last eighteen hundred years. Thirty-six great eruptions, involving serious calamities, are reckoned from that of the year 79 to the close of the last century. The eruption which took place in 472 is said to have filled all Europe with ashes. This was the third great eruption; but the thirteenth, in 1631, surpassed its predecessors in violence. Strong shocks announced its coming; dark smoke poured out of the crater; the flank of the mountain opened, and seven floods of lava rushed out, destroying towns and villages on their way. Boiling water followed the burning flood; this new deluge spread over the whole country, inundating and destroying it; trees and houses were carried away everywhere. Five hundred persons were drowned at Torre del Greco, and three thousand in Naples. The eruption of 1794 was almost as frightful. Sir William Hamilton beheld it, and has left

us a lamentable account of this dreadful scene. His narrative resembles that of Pliny in its essential particulars. The boiling sea, the dull eclipse of day, the prayers and lamentations of the people, seem the very same of which Pliny wrote to Tacitus, seventeen centuries before.

With this terrible history of the volcano, we are all more or less familiar by reading; it becomes better impressed on the mind when we see daily the author of so much mischief, and no doubt the impression is still stronger when we ascend Vesuvius. The timid generally conjure up a vision of burning lava, of showers of stones and ashes, and in short of all sorts of volcano perils as the inevitable consequences of the ascent. I have been assured by the prudent, nothing of the kind need be apprehended. Trust your guide and keep out of the way of the lava, and it will not seek you; do not go to the edge of the crater and it cannot possibly devour you. It is true that a few years ago, an imprudent young man, venturing too near, fell in, and perished miserably in the flames, but such accidents are rare, and are not the real

dangers which Vesuvius offers; dangers which few warn you against, and which are more fatal than the more obvious peril. I allude to the exhaustion caused by the ascent, and to the liability of taking cold and fever in consequence. Foreigners who visit this beautiful country are slow to understand that this mild and splendid climate has perils of its own. The heat of the sun is dangerous, the fresh sea breeze is dangerous, long walks or excursions in the heat of spring are dangerous to the careless and the imprudent. The natives expose themselves far less than foreigners, whose recklessness often costs them health or life. Two have died within the last fortnight, simply from imprudence.

A Belgian lady took cold, and had a sore throat. She thought nothing of it, and went off to Sorrento. The keen sea and mountain air proved fatal to her. She became very ill, and had no sooner reached the hotel, than her husband telegraphed for the first doctor in Naples. He came at once, and found her dead.

The other case is as sad. An English lady and

her family went up to Vesuvius. They took with them their French maid, to whom they were partial; and as the ascent, though not an extravagant affair, is expensive, they gave her, as they thought, a proof of kindness in allowing her to share their pleasure. But she was too weak for the fatigue, and for the contrast between the heat of the ascent and the sharpness of the keen sea-breeze. She came home tired and feverish. The next day she was ill. A doctor was called in; to the despair of the mistress, he declared that there was no hope for the poor girl. The first medical men of Naples were consulted, and they all agreed in the same sad verdict. Its truth was verified in a few days.

Such cases are common. Death, indeed, does not inevitably follow, but illness is frequent. Persons in delicate health, and who are not proof against the trying contrasts of heat and cold, must choose their time well before they go to Vesuvius. The weather not proving favourable to us, we delayed going until we could not go at all; and we thus missed one of the most interesting sights in Italy.

Such objections did not apply to Pompeii. The ruined city, indeed, is burned up with the sun, and takes several hours to explore; but, with care and early hours, it is a pleasant excursion, and no more. A railroad now leads the traveller to Pompeii. You take your ticket at the office for the city of the Romans.

This railroad has the ugliness of most rail-roads, and it has not their redeeming quality of swiftness. Slowly you pass through villages, towns, and country, seeing everything under the common-place distorted aspect which seems the privilege of this mode of travelling. The time is gone when railroads could be attacked. They have fought their way, and they will make it good so long as this civilisation lasts; but if they have brought us nearer to beauty — if they have saved us a world of trouble and money, may we not ask why they have introduced us to so much gratuitous ugliness? The road was a quiet friend, which wound by the hedge, passed through the village, and climbed the mountain, patient and slow like a pilgrim, and, though often tame enough, ever in harmony with all

around him. The railroad is an enemy — he cuts through the hedge, through the rock, through the city, and delights in havoc and destruction. He shows you all the mean places of a town — the roofs, the yards, everything which the eye of a stranger should never see; he rides through fields like one who despises them; he pierces the mountain, but he leads you into no picturesque fastnesses — no citadels of rock, no haunts of the eagle open on your path. He takes you into a straight ravine — rigid, bare, and stifling — into a cold avenue of stone walls. If he were on Mont Blanc, he would pass through it in the same heartless, engineering fashion. His only glimpse of poetry is the tunnel. There you feel him, because you fear him. In that dark gap, with clouds of steam flying before you, and a rushing sound for ever pursuing you behind, you feel yourself at his mercy, and, in some measure, you are conquered.

There is nothing very striking or very beautiful in the carriage road from Castellamare to Naples, but it shows you the country, the villages, or small

towns as they are. You bear away images from Torre dell' Annunziata, from Portici — glimpses of doorways, of villas and their gardens, of fields and their culture, remain to you. From the railroad, slow though it is, you see nothing that you care to remember, Vesuvius excepted. Near and threatening, the mountain lies clearly exposed to view. You certainly see it long and well, with its rugged lava flanks, too black for rock, too hard for earth.

The morning was bright and clear, the sun shone brilliantly. We saw, in all its horror, the trace of the last lava flood, which had changed, a year ago, so many fertile farms and homesteads into a mountain desert. Useless is the warning. The people will build here again — new homes shall arise where the old ones stood — another generation shall receive this inheritance of danger and death.

It has been so since the days when Pompeii perished. After the catastrophe so eloquently related by Pliny, those amongst the inhabitants of the buried city who had found time to escape, returned

to the ashy plain which now covered their old home. They found the roofs of temples, the capitals of columns alone rising in the dreary field of death. The houses had all vanished. Nevertheless, they dug the earth in the spots where they conjectured their old homes to lie, and recovered much of their lost treasure. Undoubted traces of the earth having been stirred, and the houses searched, have been found in many parts of Pompeii. But not satisfied with this, and clinging to the soil with the passionate love of the Campanian race, they built another Pompeii, inferior in size and beauty, near the site of the old. Thus, at least, antiquarians have explained the fact that the name of Pompeii survived for several centuries the destruction of the year 79, and only vanished from maps and history when another eruption, in the fifth century, laid this fatal plain finally waste.

But ruins of the old Pompeii long remained, and preserved its memory even unto within a few centuries ago. The Emperor Alexander Severus extracted valuable statues and precious marbles from its buildings and temples, and the poet San-

nazar, in the sixteenth century, speaks of Pompeii — of its miserable fate, of its houses, temples, and theatres, which he saw. It is certain that the summit of the amphitheatre, which is above the level of the places still unexcavated, must always have been visible; and it is well known that, in the year 1572, the architect, Dominic Fontana, who was commissioned by the Prince of Sarno to build him an aqueduct, discovered a considerable portion of Pompeii. The traces of his aqueduct are said to exist still near the temple of Isis; but I forgot inquiring for them, and cannot speak on my own authority. Spite these tokens, the ruins that reared their heads above the surface of the soil were allowed to crumble into dust, and vineyards of the Lacryma Christi grew undisturbed above the buried city. Antiquity was then loved in its gods and goddesses, which peopled our poetry, and gave our literature a most heathenish character; but ancient ruins were better in a Claude Lorraine than in the reality. Pompeii slept undisturbed her sixteen centuries' sleep. At length, the day of the wakening came.

A Prince of Elbœuf, of the house of Lorraine, had married a daughter of the Prince of Salsa. He had settled in the kingdom of Naples, and was building himself a villa near Portici. He bought every fragment of antiquity brought to him by the peasants; then he began excavating on his own account. His architect made a shrewd guess. A temple was discovered on the first attempt, viz., in 1720. But the Prince was not allowed to proceed, and matters remained in this state until Charles III. ascended the throne. This enlightened Prince at once took the matter in hand. He built the Palace of Portici, and filled it with the fragments and statues of the Prince of Elbœuf, whose villa and collection he had purchased. He caused the excavations to be continued until a city was found, as well as a temple. This was Herculaneum; but the hardness of the lava in which it was embedded, the expense of the undertaking, and, moreover, the discovery of Pompeii, which was found by peasants digging, in 1748, and which, being only covered over by ashes, was more easily got at, caused Herculaneum to be comparatively neglected

for the sake of the more accessible city. A hundred and ten years have passed since then, and half the city is not yet bare to the eye; but marvellous is the part we have; and we need but remember the Studij in Naples to know the treasures which it has yielded. The excavations were actively carried on by Murat, but they go on more quietly now. It is conjectured that if they progress at the present rate, the whole of the city will be revealed to us in something like five hundred years.

The railway now crossed the silent country we were approaching. The carriage relaxed its speed, then stopped; the guard opened the door, and laconically said: —

“Pompeii.”

We alighted, crossed the station, and found ourselves in an alley, bordered with flowers, surrounded by fields and overlooked by mountains. Trees, and a rise of ground, concealed the lost city. At length we reached the precincts of Pompeii; the Greek colony is now crown property, and under the care of royal keepers. No one is allowed to wander

alone in its streets and houses; too wise a precaution, when we remember the generally destructive propensities of travellers, to be quarrelled with.

A sedate, middle-aged man, perceiving our approach, came to meet us, and took possession of us with a quiet authority, that distinguished him at once from the bustling cicerone. Without speaking, and merely ascertaining that we were desirous of entering the city by the street of tombs, he preceded us slowly up the path.

The morning was beautiful; the sun shone brilliantly; the sky had not a cloud; the breeze was fresh and delightful; a few trees growing on the high banks that enclosed the path, shivered and bent in a way that spoke of pleasant coolness; the magnificent purple flowers of the *mesembryanthemum* covered the banks with their star-like blossoms and green succulent stems and leaves, and on either side of us rose the tombs and funeral monuments which have given the street its name. The street itself ended in a broken arch, rising on the clear blue of the sky. We were in the suburb of Augustus Felix; the ruined gate was that which

the Pompeians called the gate of Herculaneum, because it led to that city; the road-like street that passed beneath the arch was the Via Appia. We had found it in the Roman Campagna, passing between ruined temples and decayed tombs, and it met us here again, still guarded by the dead, a fit entrance to a dead city.

Deep and powerful is the impression which the first aspect of Pompeii produces. It differs from every other ruin in Italy. The stern greatness of Pæstum, the ancient majesty of the Forum, the graceful temple of the sibyl, are ages old; but this silent and solitary spot looks more forsaken than ancient or ruined; no contrasts between the present and the past remind us of buried generations, replaced by the men and women of another faith, and often, too, of another race. Pompeii is itself, — a Campanian city, devastated by an eruption, and left, it would seem, to decay in peace, unprofaned by man.

The keepers, who are obliged to escort travellers in Pompeii, also act as guides; their information is generally correct, though limited. Our guide

showed exemplary truthfulness and modesty. When he could not answer our questions, he plainly replied: —

“I do not know.”

He now began his duties by showing us over the house of Arrius Diomedes, a freedman. This house, the largest and best preserved of the houses in Pompeii, was the first discovered. It is supposed to have belonged to Diomedes, on no stronger grounds than that the family tomb of the wealthy freedman rises near it. Whose it was, a consul's or the son of a slave's dwelling, matters little now. A handsome and elegant house it certainly must have been, built on the Roman model which the Pompeian court in Sydenham Palace has made familiar to all England. It was unusually large, for it had three storeys, only two of which remain, a wide court or garden, with columns around, and a basin in the centre; numerous apartments and conveniences, including even a cemetery for the slaves of this large household, hot and cold baths, that luxury of the Romans, and very genuine Roman bedrooms, that is to say, mere closets without

windows. It had, moreover, large underground cellars, where the Falernian wine cooled in the long and deep earthen amphora. We visited this subterranean world, memorable in the history of Pompeii. Our guide preceded us, bearing a torch, with which he lit our steps down; when we were in the gloomy vault, he said, in his laconic way: —

“These jars are the amphoræ, in which the wine was kept. Seventeen skeletons were found here. If the signore will look, they can see the marks of the skeletons on the wall.”

He raised his torch, to a man's height, and, traced in shadowy outlines, we saw on the wall, as he said, the grim design of a skeleton head. Other dark and indistinct figures were huddled together near it, but the hand of death had drawn them more feebly — their shape was vague, and might mean anything. Here, then, the unhappy fugitives had found a momentary refuge and a final grave. The burning ashes had covered the house above them, and entered even this secret place. They had rapidly choked up every avenue, filled the

amphoræ to the brim, and wrapped the seventeen fugitives in a shroud, close, fine, and stifling. The weary head was seized as it rested against the wall, and fixed there for ever. Here, too, the mistress of the house, as it is believed from the rich bracelets and rings she wore, perished with her household. But the form of her shoulders and bosom remained moulded in the ashes that enclosed her. You can see to this day, in the Studij of Naples, this strange and sad relic of the dead lady. There is but one opinion amongst the learned concerning the beauty of form it reveals. Her heavy bracelets and rings, and the other costly female ornaments, which she was probably bearing away, and which were found by her, are preserved amongst the *oggetti preziosi*. Several other skeletons were found on the premises — one, of a man, with keys and money-bags, was supposed to have been that of Diomedes, the master of the house. He was flying by the door that faced the sea, when the ashes overtook him.

I was glad to leave this melancholy cellar, where death had taken so dreary an aspect, and

visit the remainder of the house. It was large and handsome. We got upon a terrace or roof — I forget which — and sat down in the shade to rest. The view was splendid. The clear sky, the mountains purple with heat, the green country, the fresh sea-breeze, had not changed during the still flow of eighteen hundred years. Diomedes, his children, and his slaves, had enjoyed here the same delightful coolness of a May morning. Trite, but sad, very sad thoughts, even though we smile at them with pity, are these. It is sickening, at times, to think that calm, material nature should be so strong — so seemingly immortal — and that man, active and living, should pass in this beautiful world, like a fugitive pursued by Time, and to whom is allotted no place of rest.

We left the villa, and visited the tombs which have given the street its name. They are large, and interesting, and well-preserved — every one of them is more than enough to throw an archæologist into raptures, and to fill up a goodly number of octavo pages. That of Diomedes occupies a conspicuous position, and bears the following epitaph,

which I copy from one of the works in which it has long been published. To copy on the spot this and such other inscriptions as I shall give, would have been tedious and useless. They have been correctly given by the various writers who have made Pompeii the subject of their investigations; and if I repeat them, it is because the reader would probably not care to look for them where they are to be found: —

M. ARRIUS. I. L. DIOMEDES

SIBI. SUIS. MEMORIÆ.

MAGISTER. PAG. AUG. FELIC. SUB. URB.

Short and easy as this inscription seems, I have found two different versions of it. According to one authority, it means: — “Marcus Arrius Diomedes, *the freedman of Julia*, and owner of the suburb of Augustus Felix, near the city, raised this tomb to his memory and that of his kindred.”

The other translation simply states that Diomedes was the first freedman of his master, and discards Julia as apocryphal. Who could dream that the two letters, I. L., had so much mischief in them?

The inscription on the tomb of the Public Priestess, Mammia, is very honourable to that lady. We are informed that, by a decree of the Decurions, this place of sepulture was allotted to her. This was no ordinary distinction. The inscription is engraved on a semi-circular seat, behind which the tomb itself rises. The seat was a pleasant resting-place for tired travellers — the dead and the living met in the ancient world without unseemly dread or horror. The living allowed the dead to sleep at the city-gate; they excluded them from the activity of life, but not from sight and memory; the dead stayed meekly on the threshold of their old home, and offered the living all they had to give — a place of rest — a pause in the journey of life.

Another tomb, near that of Mammia, records that Marcus Porcius received from the Decurions the same honour of a public sepulchre; the measure of his sleeping-place, however, was accurately specified; twenty-five feet square, neither more nor less. The tomb of Nævoleia Tyche makes up in magnificence and size what it lacks in public dignity.

Nævoleia was a freedwoman; but the puzzling letter I. which precedes LIB. renders it doubtful whether she was the first freedwoman of some unknown master, or the freedwoman of JULIA. Rich as freedmen and freedwomen usually were, she certainly was. The inscription records that in her lifetime Nævoleia erected this tomb for herself, and for Munatius Faustus. Here occurs another difficulty. Do the words AUG. EX. PAGANO. which refer to Faustus, simply state that he resided in the Augustan suburb; or do they confer upon him the dignity of an Augustal, that is to say, a priest of Augustus. I should be sorry to attempt to decide the question; but what a God-send Pompeii must be to the learned! Faustus was certainly a distinguished person, for the inscription proceeds to add that the Decurions had conferred upon him, on account of his merits, too, the honour of the Bisellium. The Bisellium was a seat for two persons, and the honour was to sit on it alone in public assemblies. So much did Faustus and his friend Nævoleia think of this Bisellium, that they had it represented on the tomb which was to receive them. However, in

a laudable and unselfish spirit, Nævoleia decreed that this place of sepulture should also receive her freedmen and freedwomen.

I should have liked to know the fate of this little family. Did the tomb which Nævoleia had prepared with so much care ever hold her? Are hers the ashes in the earthen urn? or do they belong to Munatius Faustus, who, spite his Bisellium, appears to have come here and followed the way of all flesh? If so, did Nævoleia survive the tragedy of her country, and, wandering in Neapolis, relate, lamenting how, though she had built herself a noble sepulchre, she was never — hard fate — to enjoy it, but must lay her bones and ashes in some obscure urn! These speculations answer no great purpose; but they have their use. They irritate matter-of-fact minds who want to have everything clear, and who hate doubt as they would hate an unfinished story; they charm dreamers who like to perplex away time, and they give occupation to the critical. The tombs, however, are too numerous here, for everyone to help to build a little history. Besides the private sepulchres, we have the colum-

barium for the gladiators; the public receptacle for citizens too poor to possess a separate grave; the edifice for the silicernium or funeral repast, and a covered, semicircular seat, erected by the path, for the convenience of travellers, and which had proved as safe a tomb as any. The skeletons of a woman clasping a child in her arms, and of two other children by her, were found here.

There is a third seat by the gate. The skeleton of a soldier, lance in hand, was found here in his niche. Too faithful to desert his post, he had guarded to the last the gates of the city. We passed beneath the broken arch, and found ourselves within Pompeii. A long, narrow street, lined on either side with low, roofless houses, stretched before us in the burning sun. Not a sound was to be heard; not a soul was visible. We went on visiting houses, seeing temples, leaving one street to enter another, and still meeting the same aspect of things; still surrounded by solitude and silence.

It is difficult, impossible I think, to exaggerate the impression produced on the mind by the deserted city. The most ignorant travellers feel it, as well

as the learned. The wearied, the blaséd, who see nothing in all Italy, was moved here. For here, whether we like it or not, we cannot get rid of reality.

Here the Past is Present, and rises before us in its meanest details, and therefore in its greatest power. We cannot walk ten steps without feeling, "Is it true? Are the people of this city really dead? Are the owners of these shops and houses really gone for ever? Will the worshippers never come back to the temple? Will the citizens never again throng the Forum? Is the garden really forsaken for ever? Will children, girls, and slaves never again gather beneath the colonnade of the villa, or look from the terrace at the purple mountains, with their green slopes and the smoke of distant waterfalls? Which is the truest, that Past, which surrounds us, and seems so near, or that Present, which fades away from thought, and seems so far when we enter this charmed city?"

But, striking as is this first appearance of Pompeii, strongly as it impresses, the town must not be imagined to be in a perfect state of preservation.

No doubt, the houses are there, with their courts and their rooms. The temples, the streets, the public edifices, have all survived, or almost all; but the houses are low and roofless, the walls are sunk and broken. It is a city, indeed, but a city on which the ashes of Vesuvius have lain for seventeen centuries, and which time and weather have wasted for more than a hundred years. A few public edifices excepted, nothing large, stately, or magnificent must be expected, under penalty of disappointment; but the very smallness of the houses, the very meanness of the streets, are more impressive than massive ruins conquering the power of time. The whole place looks as if struck by some recent calamity, and deserted by its terrified inhabitants. I knew it was all an illusion — I knew that the Greeks and Romans were all safe in their graves; but if a gentleman in the toga, or a lady wrapped in the matronly stola, had stepped out from beneath a porch, or turned the corner of a street, I cannot believe that I should have been much surprised. They would, at least, have been in better keeping with the place than

the smart little Italian girl who walked out of one of the smaller houses — it was plain she was a denizen of the place — and whose appearance was followed by the squalling of a very modern baby.

The general smallness of the houses excepted, Pompeii appears to have been a handsome and important city. A considerable portion of its walls still exists. They are built in travertine and volcanic stone, and broad enough for an agreeable evening promenade. Their strength, and the towers and gates which guarded them, show that the Pompeians were not unmindful of defence. The streets of the town are narrow, but so they are in the finest Italian cities. The heat of the climate does not render wide streets desirable. They are paved in the centre with flags of lava, for carriages and horses, and, on either side, there is a raised pavement for foot-passengers. The *trottoirs*, which were so long confined to England, and which have become popular in the continent within recent times, were in general use amongst the Romans eighteen centuries ago.

This raised pavement, which is made of lime

and gravel, is frequently embellished with patterns, or marble, according to the fancy of the rich man whose dwelling it passes. Some wealthy Pompeian citizen, whose name I have forgotten, took care to signify to all the breadth of his property, by an irregular mosaic of bright-coloured marbles, which fronted his house. These streets, though they were not new at the time the city was destroyed, are excellently preserved. The raised pavements, the kerb-stones, the stepping-stones across the causeway, to avoid having wet feet when the heavy Italian rain did not flow away fast enough through the drains, the deep dents which the wheels of cars had worn in the lava-flags, are fresh as if crowds, cars, and horses had passed here yesterday.

Shops are numerous. They cluster round the houses of the rich landlord whose property they are, and who derives a considerable revenue from letting them to tradesmen. They are almost exactly like the shops of Sorrento and other small places round Naples. Business, not show, is their aim. Some are mere stone counters, with round

holes, in which the pointed amphora of oil or wine is sunk; and, to all appearance, the customer stands in the street to be served. The houses themselves vary in size and beauty, according to the wealth of the owner. The villa of Diomedes is the handsomest and largest, but elegant and luxurious dwellings are numerous.

The house of the vestals is very pretty. The hospitable SALVE greets you from the threshold on which it is written in mosaic. Within, you find courts, a garden, a sacrarium for worship, and the closet-like rooms which the ladies of the house slept in. Handsome paintings, stucco columns, a quantity of female ornaments, and the skeletons of two women and a little dog were found in this house when it was first discovered. The house of the tragic poet seems to have belonged to less amiable owners. The mosaic of the vestibule formerly portrayed an angry cur, with the warning inscription, "CAVE CANEM" (Beware of the dog). This mosaic is now in the Studij. The house is pretty, but small, and not equal to the house of Pansa, a public officer and a rich Pompeian. Four

small shops front the street, but do not detract from the stateliness of the entrance, through which we see the suite of courts and rooms on to the garden behind. From the vestibule we enter into the atrium, a court with the impluvium, or basin, in the centre, to receive the rain-water. Around the atrium are four of these cupboard-like Roman bed-rooms, which always excite the admiration of moderns. Beyond the atrium comes the tablinum, where the family pictures and objects of vertu were kept — hence its name. After the tablinum appears the peristyle — another court like the atrium, but supported by pillars. A square impluvium occupies the centre of the peristyle, and more closets for beds are to be found on either side. In a corner, on the left, we find the kitchen; the dining-room was on the right, between the two courts. A few small rooms, a terrace, and garden close all that remains to us of the conveniences of this Roman household, for the upper floor of the house has perished, and the bottom is roofless.

The house of the Faun is in the same style, and very graceful. The atrium is paved in jasper,

agate, and alabaster. The peristyle, or second court, was originally a garden, with a fountain in the centre. Beyond it extends a second garden, with columns, and which is supposed to have been planted with trees. Here, seated in the shade of his laurels and planetrees, the master of the house might worship the lares to whose honour he had erected two temples, or dream away the hours as he looked at Vesuvius, serene and silent.

The public part of houses was the handsomest — it was natural that it should be so — and, in the same spirit, the public buildings of a people whose life was spent in public, surpass in magnificence the efforts of private citizens. The Forum is still very fine, though it had suffered severely from the earthquake of the year 63, and was not yet repaired when the city was destroyed, sixteen years later. It is a hundred feet wide, five hundred feet long, and is surrounded by the finest temples of the city. The stately temple of Jupiter rising, at its further extremity, above a flight of steps, shattered by the earthquake, overlooks the whole place, and adds considerably to its magnificence.

The temple of Venus, which is close by, was likewise a handsome and elegant building. Not far away from it is the Basilica, which was both the court of justice and the exchange of the Pompeians. Here criminals were tried. The judge sat aloft, on a stone tribunal, and we were shown a dreary subterranean hole, and told that prisoners were kept in it, chained to the walls, and questioned through the grated openings in the flags above; but it is a doubtful fact — and God forbid that even Romans should have been so barbarous! If it was true — if the sad voices of strangers and slaves, for Romans could not be treated so, rose hopeless and despairing to the cold ear of the judge on his seat of honour and state, and found not mercy there — for justice was not to be thought of — was the fate which swept away the judge from his tribunal, the crowd from the Forum, the people from the streets, and left these places desolate for ever, too hard a fate? True, the circus was barbarous, but it had its excuse — the people loved blood, and it was a pleasure — the pitiless dungeon has none.

Nine temples, in all, have, I believe, been discovered in Pompeii; the most remarkable are, the temples of Jupiter, of Venus, the Pantheon, where the twelve vacant pedestals of the supreme gods were found without their divinities, and the curious little temple of Isis. We saw here the secret hiding-place, whence the priest spoke in the name of the goddess, and delivered the oracles of heavenly wisdom. The statue of Isis is in the Egyptian gallery at the Studij. The face is sweet and grave; in her left hand the Egyptian divinity holds the sacred and mysterious sistrum.

The temples, the two Forums — for there is a smaller one, the Basilica, show that the Pompeians were amply provided with suitable buildings, so far as the worship of the Gods and the business of life went; the amphitheatre and the two theatres prove that they were not unmindful of pleasure. When the gate of Herculaneum was first discovered, an inscription in red and black paint — the Romans not having paper, had no playbills — announced that the gladiators of Rufus would give two combats in the amphitheatre, and moreover that there

would be a hunt, with a velarium, that is to say, with an awning to keep off the sun. There is another announcement to the same purport, and which gives the name of another courtier to public favour.

“The gladiators of Aulus Svezius Cerius, Ædile, will fight in Pompeii the last day of the Kalends of June. There will be a hunt and velarium.”

The announcement of the hunt comes last, as a sort of N.B. Not without a purpose is this. Wild beasts are dearer than men; and a hunt is a treat indeed. The worn steps of the Pompeian amphitheatre show how much the citizens valued such treats. It is well preserved, and could hold about twenty thousand persons. The entire population of the town, not including children or slaves, could therefore enjoy the pleasures of the arena.

The amphitheatre of Pompeii, though far better preserved than the Colosseum, impresses less, because it is generally seen after it; but Rome has nothing like the two theatres we see here. The tragic theatre could be acted in still. Sad, pas-

sionate Phædra could cross that stage lamenting; here Medea could look at her children playing, and brood over a fearful revenge. Through these doors behind, we might see and hear the chorus of sad, captive Trojan women, passing like a funereal train, and mourning over fallen Troy, whilst Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon in a distant hall of the palace of Argos. And grouped around that narrow stage, where all the dreary, heroic, and noble visions of the ancient world passed in turns, might sit the Decurions, the Augustals, the citizens who enjoyed the Bisellium in the first ranks; the military officers behind them, and, last and highest, the people and the women to whom, before the ages of chivalry, the worst places everywhere were assigned.

The Odeon, or comic theatre, is likewise very well preserved. In one of the rooms of the Studij, devoted to the relics of Pompeii and Herculaneum, you can see little ivory counters, Tesseræ they were called, which were generally used in public places as cards of admission. In theatres they were inscribed with the name of the play to be acted and

the seat to which they gave a right. Thus, one belonging to this Odeon of Pompeii, directs you to go in by the second door, and to take the third corner, eighth row in the theatre; the play acted will be the *Casina*, by Plautus.

These were the chief public buildings of Pompeii; but there were, and still are, others of lesser importance, smaller and more domestic. We may still visit the barracks near the two theatres, and read, if we have skill, time, and learning, the rude scrawls of idle soldiers; clear, well-cut, legible inscriptions never tempt me, but, I confess, the strange, ill-written, ill-spelt fragments, which one sees everywhere about Pompeian walls and places, are most tantalizing. Some are in the language of the Osci, the old inhabitants of Campania, and unintelligible to any, save savants of the first water; others are in common Latin, but more easily deciphered at home in learned books than in the burning sun and in a street of Pompeii. Some of these inscriptions are advertisements. They tell the curious idlers when the gladiators shall fight and wild beasts roar in the arena; they tell business

people about the letting of shops and houses, and refer you to obliging landlords, who will give lease, security, &c., on the most moderate terms; or they are signs put up by trading bodies, such as, "The carpenters and carmen recommend themselves to the *Ædile Marcellinus*," or by individual tradesmen, like this one of the Scribe *Issus*, who "beseeches *Marcus Cerrinius Vatia*, the *Ædile*, to extend his patronage to him," of which favour the said *Issus* modestly declares himself to be deserving. "Dignus est," he says, in his grand Roman way, which is only a stately puff.

Besides the barracks, we have the baths, small, but curious; snugly built, so as not to be exposed to the north wind, and heated by flues, fragments of which are still visible. The cold, lukewarm, and hot baths; the niches for undressing, the perfumes and ointments of this popular and favourite luxury of the ancients, were all to be found here. The baths are near the Forum, and by its eastern entrance, a wide room, with a stone seat, and the inscription, *VARNA DISCENTIBUS*, is supposed to have been a school. However, it was a holyday when

we saw it. Varna was out, and the pupils were invisible. An inn, a public granary, a Fullonica, or scouring house, and other places of general interest, are to be found in various parts of the city. The beautiful gate, built by the Priestess Eumachia, has been removed to the Studij, as well as her graceful statue, and the inscription which recorded that the crypt Portico, the Chalcidicum and the Fullonica of Pompeii were erected at her expense. A copy of the statue stands in the place whence the original was removed. That original has not the grand Greek style, but it is sweet and charming; modest grace breathes in the folds of the drapery; the face looks a portrait. Beauty is immortal. The handsome and stately priestess lives to this day in an Anglo-Norman lady, who has not seen, and does not care to see, this faithful image of herself. Resemblances are capricious, and do not always take the form of beauty; I have seen the characteristic features of Trajan very correctly repeated in an Irish family more remarkable for genius than for good looks.

These are the chief objects of interest in Pom-

peii; the exact order in which these places and buildings occurred on our way, I have not always given, lest I should commit unconscious mistakes. Pompeii is large and perplexing. The streets, with their roofless houses, look very much alike; here and there you have a little variety, in a raised bank of earth, overgrown with nodding trees, which grow — a very tantalizing thought — above more buried marvels, left there for some royal visitor to have the first sight of, or, what is just as likely, for future generations to groan over the supineness of this; or a cluster of buildings and temples, as in the case of the Forum, which was the centre of Pompeian architecture, individualizes a certain part of the city to the mind's eye, and leaves it as a clear and distinct image; but as, unless you are a wilful traveller, or know Pompeii better than the men who spend their life in showing it, you generally follow your guide with blind docility, going in and out as he tells you, crossing streets, entering alleys, and visiting places, without knowing why, it is almost impossible, without writing it down on the spot — and who can have the heart to write

in Pompeii? — to know exactly whether it was that house or this you saw first; whether you took that street or this turning.

Thus I have but an imperfect remembrance of the spots, were we saw, however, three of the things that struck us most forcibly; memorials more impressive than remarkable of the ancient world through which he had been journeying. Pompeii had, as I have already mentioned, been severely damaged by the earthquake of the year 63. The citizens were anxious to repair the injury one of their temples had sustained. New columns were to be provided; architect and sculptor set to work. The columns are there cut and shaped, but not finished; the carving of the capitals had begun, when temple and builder were buried together. And still the column stands there, rude and unfinished, vainly waiting for man's hand to fashion it. The God and the worshippers have been swept away; time devoured them both, and left that pillar as a memorial and a sign.

To see the amphitheatre, we crossed a green field, with trees and flowers. We came back through

it, and entered once more the sunburnt streets, hedged with roofless houses. Our guide paused before a small public well, which stood, I believe, in a thoroughfare. He called it the "Fountain of Fortune," from the cornucopia which adorned it. It represented a round, shining, marble face, smoothed and worn by time, in which the sculptor, indeed, had never thrown much expression, and which an open mouth, meant for the water to flow through contributed to render vacant and unmeaning. It was a fair specimen of street art. Without speaking, our guide, who never wasted words, placed his right hand on the back of the fountain, his left on the margin of the well, and, stooping, drank an imaginary draught of fictive water, falling from the ever open mouth of the goddess; after which he rose, and removing his hands, showed us that, where he had laid them, other hands, ages ago, had worn the stone into two deep dents.

It was a picture — rapid, vivid in the extreme. A whole scene of life, ancient and modern, passed before us in a moment. The houses were roofed, the streets were living, the day was hot, a crowd

had gathered round the well. We saw the brown, half-naked children, the thirsty slave, the girl with her pitcher, waiting turns by the fountain, drinking, drawing water, laughing, exchanging jests, idling away time, and filling this place, now so quiet, with Greek and Latin talking.

The third memorial was almost puerile, and quite unworthy of ancient gravity. It was a little garden, belonging to one of the many houses we visited, and which had evidently been the delight of a Pompeian citizen's heart. It was laid out in approved cockney style. Such gardens every one has seen again and again near London or any large city. To this day, there is one in Plough Lane, which offers an almost exact resemblance to the Pompeian garden.

It was square and small. A little niche, curiously stuck over with shells, had once been a fountain, and could have been one still. Little statuettes of heathen divinities were perched up on tiny mounds of earth and rock-work, which had been formerly covered with grass or flowers; and between the mounds ran tiny paths, which must have required

a careful tucking-up of Roman skirts for the deities not to be injured by some hasty passer-by.

It was touching and pitiable to look at this little place, which had cost time, and care, and thought, and to see that ages may pass, and that man is still an overgrown child, setting his heart on trifles that have still the redeeming virtue of keeping him out of mischief. Better by far the little garden of the Pompeian citizen than the amphitheatre, where he saw man butchered by man — or even than the Forum, with its statues and temples, where consciences were sold and bought. Better the garden than the Basilica and its dreary hole of torment.

This is all which I remember of Pompeii — much has escaped both observation and memory, much was lost by ignorance of ancient manners. We had done with our guide, and he had done with us. He led us back to the entrance of the city, and, in the presence of his fellow-keepers, he gravely asked, "If we were satisfied with him?"

"Quite," we replied; and we put in his hand what we considered a sufficient reward for the trouble he had taken.

He glanced at it, and said, with much dignity: —

“And I am satisfied with you.”

The momentary surprise I felt at his remark showed me how little we are accustomed to the display of independence from persons we have taken the habit to consider inferiors.

Having thus signified his approbation, our guide handed the money to one of his companions, to put it in the common stock. It is a sensible and just rule amongst these men, to divide fairly what they get from visitors, who are thus spared a great deal of annoyance.

A gentle bend of the head and touching of the cap were the parting salutation of our guide. He belonged to the grave and lofty variety of the Italian — he spoke little, but to the purpose.

We were crossing a street of Pompeii, when we witnessed a disgraceful scene, which I omitted mentioning in its place. A well-dressed man, an Italian, was upbraiding his coachman for having promised to make him dine in Pompeii, which is royal property, and will not permit such liberties;

but, not satisfied with reprimand, he raised his cane, and struck him severely. The unfortunate vetturino screamed and jumped with pain. Our guide frowned, and, looking at us, said significantly: —

“Gentlemen wonder when they get a stab of the knife now and then.”

There was a whole social system in the words. The insolent cane on the side of strength — the perfidious, revengeful knife on the side of the weak.

We went back to the station; it was early yet; no train to Naples was expected for some time; the officials were absent and as invisible as the Pompeians, whose city we had just left. Spite the heat, we sat down outside the station, and stayed there till the train came up.

Noonday stillness slept on the quiet country; mountains surrounded and overlooked the landscape. It was wild and beautiful in its Italian way, for English parks or gentle lake scenery do not thrive here. It was lonely, too, though it bore signs of culture; but neither man's voice nor man's presence were near.

It is the misery of travelling, that you cannot bear to leave beautiful places. To leave Pompeii, never again, perhaps, to see the wonderful old city; to lose for ever the presence of those mountains, which were strange yesterday, and will be strange to-morrow, to be divided from the beautiful south and its world of memorials, stranger than a fairy tale, may seem little to those who have never, or rarely, moved from the circle of home, or who have not stayed away long enough to lose the sense of its presence, but it is a pain, and a great one, when the last days of your Italian year are drawing to a close. One could not indeed, if one wished it, stay in Pompeii; but Pompeii was Italy just then, and Italy in May is Paradise.

NINTH CHAPTER.

A Last Look.

ITALY has two aspects; her inland cities and her shores. We saw her first after crossing the Simplon. From the wildest mountains we had yet seen, we descended into the valleys of Piedmont; we crossed Lago Maggiore, entered the plains of Lombardy, and did not rest until we came to Milan, a noble city indeed, but as much French as Italian in its aspect. From Milan we took one of the usual routes. Verona, Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Florence. Here Italy was unmistakable; a hot and not beautiful country, fine old cities, decayed by time, and burned up with the sun, dusty roads, with a bright red villa perched on one hill, and a ruined keep on the other; little verdure, and that little very dusty, gave to everything we saw a character, a physionomie, as the French say, to remember it by for ever.

The route from Florence to Rome brought us

through the Campagna. Another Italy, grand, majestic, melancholy, opened before us. I remember a little lake, with yellow autumn woods bending down the hill to its glassy mirror; wide plains, where the buffalo-herds chased each other wildly; endless wastes, where the shadows of clouds lay like purple stains; where horizons seemed to fade before they reached the sky. A third and last aspect of Italy met us on the Roman frontier, the road from Rome to Naples. The silent Campagna, the sluggish desert of the Pontine marshes, were both left behind. A wild road passed between rocks, made for brigands; the myrtle, the pomegranate, the laurel, were in full bloom; the air was too sweet; the sky was of the most enchanting blue; everywhere southern luxuriance met us; it was a fit approach to Naples, to Sorrento, to the shores and islands of the sirens. Some resemblance between the first and last aspect of Italy memory could trace, but it was faint indeed.

Something in the same kind is the progression along the Italian shore from the south northward. It was one of the last days of May that we em-

barked on board the *Oronte* for Marseilles. The *Oronte* was coming from Malta, and was crowded with passengers from the East. We had Turkish gentlemen, Levantine Jews, Arab servants, pilgrims from Jerusalem, Armenian ladies, priests, Swedes, Germans, and the usual amount of French and English tourists. The steamer certainly looked a picturesque one, but picturesque objects are often inconvenient. All the berths were taken, and we had to sleep on the floor. The next day, at Civita Vecchia, ladies came on board, who had to sleep on deck, and whose beds, for it rained all night, were pleasantly dried in the sun for the next evening. This, it seems, is an old story with packets from the East, which prudent travellers must always eschew.

Our last look of the bay was not a pleasant one. The wind was keen, the sky was dark, the rain soon began to fall. But are shores ever really beautiful from sea? It seems to me that they are not. The grace of verdure, its tender colouring, the picturesque grouping of trees, the position of villages and towns, melt away from sight, and

blend in a few patches of colour, in a few light or dark spots, in a few lines, which, unless when very grand, scarcely catch the eye, and the loveliest of places may be passed, unknown and uncared for.

We spent the next day in the port of Civita Vecchia, with the Fort of Michael Angelo to look at. A French officer, from the Ecole Polytechnique, informed me, when we saw it for the first time, two years ago, that it was impregnable, which is a sort of knowledge that increases one's respect for a place.

I had suffered too much from sea-sickness to care much for anything; but ladies, who had been travelling longer and become inured, stayed on deck for something besides the air. A great deal of flirting in French went on between the medical officer of the *Oronte* and a beautiful Armenian girl of fifteen. She was the first specimen of Eastern beauty I had seen, and she reminded me of the raptures Lady Mary Wortley Montague has bestowed on Turkish ladies. Her features were almost perfect; her complexion was of lilies and roses; her

long, dark, almond eyes were like no other eyes; her laugh, her look, her smile, were bewitching and irresistible. Her mother preserved the remains of great beauty, and smoked dainty cigarettes. Her elder sister was lovely, and modest as a Madonna. They were all three dressed in the latest French fashions, and wore exquisite Paris pink bonnets; but they looked Eastern for all that. In general, the Oriental ladies dressed as if they were in a drawing-room. Light-coloured silks, laces, jewels, hair smoothed and twisted as if hours had been spent by the tirewoman, showed that the toilette was held paramount even on the steamer. A family of Scotch or English girls seemed to me to understand travelling attire much better. Close-fitting, neat, and simple, their toilette was exactly suited to the place in which it was worn.

The next day brought us to Leghorn. We might have landed, if we pleased; but we dreaded the fatigue, and remained on board. Everything looked cold and tame, nothing seemed tempting. Already the beautiful sky of Italy was getting greyer as we neared the north — light was passing

away, and with it beauty. Plenty of unfortunate travellers came on board. I was close to an English family as they entered the steamer. They asked for their berths.

"Berths! — there were no berths!"

"Where, then, were they to sleep?"

"On deck," was the cool reply.

The mother, daughter, and son exchanged silent, exasperated looks.

"Well," said the son, at length, in a hard, gloomy voice — "well, we always say we shall not be taken in next time!"

He could not add another word. He had conjured up a vision of past miseries and wrongs, which it is imprudent to remember when you are not sitting at home in your pleasant drawing-room by your own fire. Poor things! they seemed very sore on the subject, and it was some time before they calmed down.

But even travellers with berths have their miseries. An old English gentleman took a fancy to see Leghorn. He went and came back in a boat, and, on his return, had the entertainment of a

quarrel with the boatman, who charged I know not what extravagant sum. The English gentleman swore in English that nothing should make him pay. He got red in the face, he shook his fist and the boatman, calm, dignified, and cool, waited for his money with the majesty of a prince, and got it, of course, when the Englishman's furore was exhausted. On receiving it, he indulged in a chuckling laugh, and went off slyly triumphant.

The little I have seen of steamers has helped me to understand why so many novels take us on board ship. This floating ark is an epitome of the large world, and often a very amusing one. There was on board the *Oronte* a French pilgrim from Jerusalem, who was both the entertainment and the torment of the various individuals he took hold of. His garments were worn and torn, his head was neglected, his personal appearance was not as nice as it could have been. He had a painful consciousness of this, he knew that he was at a disadvantage, and he began a conversation with the engaging query of: —

“I look a low, dirty fellow, do I not?”

This was a most embarrassing question, for he really did not look very clean; but without waiting for an answer, he would resume:—

“It takes a vast amount of money to go to Jerusalem. Shabby as I look, I have means.”

Then followed an account of his territorial possessions, of his income, &c.

On every other subject he was rational, and talked sensibly. I am afraid, however, that few people got over the first impression of his dilapidated wide-awake and untrimmed beard; he passed from passenger to passenger with significant rapidity. His last victim was a good-natured French priest, whose cassock he held fast, and whom he never dropped until we reached Marseilles.

The steamers between Naples and Marseilles travel at night, and spend the day-time in the various ports. We spent one day in Civita Vecchia, another in Leghorn; our third day was passed within view of Genoa. We had seen Genoa once before; we had seen her at six in the morning, on a clear December day, milder than May in England. We had seen the sea and sky lit with the gold of

a rising sun; the triple mountains, yellow and burning; the marble palaces, splendid; the gardens, verdant and beautiful; and having seen her thus, we ought never to have seen her again. But will had not much to do with it; on a day when the sea tossed us in the port; when heavy clouds, though vast, veiled the mountains; when a sullen sky spread wherever we looked, when the gardens looked cold and the palaces dingy, when, moreover, the rain poured in torrents, we saw Genoa again.

No one on board was surprised. It always rained in Genoa; it rained at least six days out of the seven; Genoa was a wretched city. I heard, but could not believe them. The first impression was more potent than the second, or than their experience. I recognized but one Genoa, and she was hot, sunlit, and splendid. This second one was a stranger and an alien, to look at and forget.

It would have been more pleasant, however, to have had a better look at Italy, for a last one, but an agreeable Swedish gentleman, who had come on board at Civita Vecchia, gave us some comfort.

He spoke English well, and he had travelled in the East, in Germany, and in Italy. "Well, then, he assured us, and it was no illusion of national feeling — there was no country like Sweden! none. Italy was beautiful, but Sweden was more beautiful still; if we liked fine scenery, why did we not go to Sweden?" He was unprejudiced, however, for he confessed that Sweden was rather cool.

We heard him, and what could we say? The German gentleman, who hated the bore of seeing Baia, had once gravely uttered the following speech: —

"I have seen all Italy. I have seen Sicily, I have been in the East and visited the Pyramids; well, then, I assure you there is no country so sweet, so beautiful, so charming as Germany."

I thought that, apart from patriotism, our German friend might love the North and prefer it; but his parting words showed that it was not so.

"Good bye," he said; "if you come to Italy, to France, or to Germany, you may meet me again;

but never expect to see me in England. I detest practical countries."

A French priest, fresh from Rome, assured us in the same spirit that it was an illusion to compare Italy to France, so much was France the superior. An English lady, residing in Naples, gravely told us there was no place like Devonshire. In short, so many were the places more desirable than Italy, which lay before us, that it seemed folly to waste a feeling of regret upon this overpraised country.

We lost sight of her the next morning. The perilous French Coast, the rocky islets, the chateau d'If, the splendid port of Marseilles and its magnificent shipping were before us. The day was fine, the sun was shining; coming from London or Paris we should have thought the sky a splendid sky; but coming from Naples it looked grey and dull, and told us plainly that a year of light and splendour was over.

THE END.

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